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THE BLACK CAT, SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

Planks From the Editor's Platform

An Ultimatum and a Want Ad

It is no sinecure this business of being an editor, this task of trying to supply some thousands of readers with the best in the way of entertaining fiction.

Every type of story is embraced in the words "entertaining fiction." The editor's job really presents its complex aspects when he attempts to secure that type of story more entertaining than others—the love story.

However trying it is to get good romantic fiction when writers persist in doing "war stuff," our enthusiasm is not materially lessened. We know that we can get what we want, if we try hard enough and long enough.

This, therefore, is by way of being an ultimatum and a want ad.

We will have no more "war stuff." On the other hand, we would go far to secure good love stories—one story or a car load.

Nor do we want that which is called "a tale of love and war." There is no room here for either the war story with love as a by-product or the love story with war as a by-product. We want the pure, unalloyed article with no sign of munition factories working three shifts a day in the background.

For this reason, we announced recently in a writer's trade journal that we did not care to consider war stories.

In the next issue of that paper, P. F. N. said:

> In your issue of July 15th, you quote THE BLACK CAT: "We want no more war stories for the next two years." This on top of my receipt from the editor thereof of a check for a tense and tragic one on the Marne retreat, I guess mine was the one that finished them.

The fact is we bought several war stories after Mr. P. F. N. received his check for the story "Mars, Humorist," which was published last month. We overloaded our stomach with fiction of this type and are still vastly overstocked. Mr. P. F. N.'s yarn didn't "finish" us by any means, although there is no doubt about our being "finished" at the present writing. We are through. There is no plank for "war stuff" in our platform.

And so we register this wail along with other jaded editors, who have had stories of strife and bloodshed foistered upon them for the last two years.

It is romance for which we are looking—for the soothing influence of buggy riding or flivering in quiet lanes where there are wheel ruts and grass and the worn path in the middle. Either that or the romance which vegetates on fire escapes. And somewhere there should be the scent of flowers of wild, garden, or window-box variety.

We crave this sort of story which has the richness of soft tones and subdued effects—the thing of beauty, complete, charming, irresistible.

THE GIRL IN THE BLUE NEGLIGEE

BY HELEN DEAN WHITE

A richly romantic little story is this one, with a climax that leaves you tingling. It is written in a retrospective vein and is easily the most delectable morsel in this number.

IT had happened thirty years before but he still liked to remember it. A wild, daredevil youth of twenty he had been then, ready for anything that spelled adventure and risk. Sometimes he wondered if the sedate elderly gentleman, fast acquiring a "bay window," who looked back at him from the full length mirror in his expensive bedroom, had ever really been the slim, blackhaired, reckless youngster of those early days.

Not that he really wished to bring those old times back again. He was very well satisfied with life. But from the comfortable security of his placid, successful, middle age, it was pleasant to look back and remember those past adventures, as it is pleasant to sit by the fire on a stormy day and read of thrilling escapades and hair-breadth escapes. He liked to remember, with a chuckle, that more than once he had laid himself liable to the penitentiary, not so much for the material gain accruing thereby, as for the wild fun of it. And most of all, he liked to remember, as the most romantic episode in his life, the girl in the blue negligee.

There was no sense of disloyalty to Marjory in the sentimental tenderness with which he cherished this memory. Marjory belonged to a different world. She was his wife and the only woman in the world he had ever wanted to marry. The sight of her delicate blond beauty in a little church in a mid-western town into which he had casually dropped one Sunday, had marked the voluntary end of his old manner of living and the beginning of the sober, respectable life which was the only side of him she knew. He had never regretted it nor felt any desire to return to his former haunts. But he had not forgotten other days. Sometimes he caught himself wishing that Marjory could understand. It would be a pleasure to talk it over with her and tell her all those long past adventures. But she was so sweet and good, and so entirely placid and contentedly conventional! Never in all her life had she done anything "out of the way" or unusual. He could imagine her horror if she knew of his own past, which had been so different from hers; and he was wise enough and guarded enough never to let her catch even an echo of that past.

The blue negligee girl, now—she had been of a spirit matching his own. She could have understood anything a man wanted to confide to her. She belonged to another order of person

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altogether from Marjory. Quite a charming little body she was, too, though of course, those romantic, adventurous girls didn't make such good wives as the domestic type. Yes, no doubt the man who had married *her* had had a gay life—never bored, always something doing, but not much peace of mind. However, he reflected, perhaps she had settled down just as he had. He chuckled as he remembered how startled he had been when he heard her voice behind him, cool as a cucumber, though most women—Marjory for instance—would have been frightened out of their wits. What she had said was "Hands up!" Then as he wheeled quickly she had added, "I have a revolver and I know how to shoot. If I aim at you in the moonlight it will be especially dangerous because I may not be able to see quite well enough to keep from hitting you in a vital spot." His laugh seemed to surprise her; and his answer astonished her so that she dropped her weapon.

"My dear little girl," he had replied, "you have pluck, but you lack experience in dealing with burglars. If I had been the ordinary hoodlum, you would have finished about two words of that nice long speech of yours to which I have listened so politely, when your gun would have been knocked from your hands and you, yourself, choked into insensibility." He picked up the revolver which she had dropped and politely restored it to her. Then, as she seemed too dumfounded to answer immediately, he added, severely, "Really you ought not to take risks. Not even a light!"

The girl found her voice.

"What would the burglar have been doing while I was striking the match and turning on the gas?" she wanted to know tartly—for this was before the day of electric lights.

"True," he answered; "but why did you come, anyway? Why not send your husband or your brother or father? Which reminds me that one or all of these gentlemen may appear at any moment and I had better pay my respects and depart." He picked up his cap and added, "As a reward for your valor, I'm going to depart empty-handed in spite of my need." And he made her a bow which would have done credit to a dancing master, and started off.

"Wait a minute," said the girl suddenly. He stopped.

"I'm not alone in the house," she said. "I can summon protection if I need it. But you are in no danger."

"May I regard this as an invitation to stay?" he asked, his eyes dancing. He tried to see her face, but in the moonlight it was only a white blur.

"Well, I should like to hear how a burglar talks," evaded the girl. "How did you come to be a burglar, anyway? And what made you come to this house? And why did you choose a night when the moon was shining?" She sat down cautiously on the edge of the table and motioned him to a seat some distance away. "I'm not a bit afraid to you," she warned him,—"not a bit in the world. But I want you to sit down over there."

He obeyed. "I'll answer your questions and then ask *you* some," he bargained. "I'm not always a burglar—only when the spirit seizes me. I'm a gentleman cracksman, like the

heroes of romance—" She thought she saw him grin in the moonlight. "I came here because I had been reliably informed that the family were all at the seashore; and also, that certain trinkets left here were remarkably fine. And now would you mind explaining your own presence here in a supposedly deserted house? How do I know that you are not a lady burglaress—a rival?"

The girl drew her silken negligee, which he thought was a bright blue shade, more closely about her and tossed one long braid over her shoulder.

"The idea!" she said indignantly. "Would a lady burglaress dress like this? I think you know that this is Mr. Alston's house, and that he has a daughter."

"I do," he responded promptly. "And I also have met and talked with Miss Ruth Alston and would recognize her voice, I think. You know she uses the broad a—cawf and lawf —and all that sort of thing. To be sure, she might forget it under the stress of meeting a burglar."

"I didn't say I was Ruth Alston," she replied, cautiously. "I didn't say who I was. As a matter of fact, I'm a friend of hers, and she is upstairs with another girl. We all came in town to shop and are spending the night here. I don't even live in New York myself. I live a long way from here."

"What made you come down?" he asked, curiously.

"I heard something. You thought no one was here and weren't trying to be quiet. So I got Ruth's little pistol and slipped down without waking the others because I knew they'd get scared and scream."

"Well, you're a wonder," he declared. "I never suspected a girl could be so plucky. But I don't approve of you at all, you know. You're too strong-minded. A woman who can take care of herself so well is an insult to masculine strength. I like the clinging vine type that make me feel like a sturdy oak. I strongly suspect you're in favor of votes for women."

"So I am," she answered. "But I know what men like—they're all like you. I'm just as cling-y vine-y as you please in ordinary life. You'd never suspect me of strong-mindedness if you met me in society. If I ever marry, I intend to deceive my husband all my life as to my fatal propensities; because I'm weak-minded and feminine enough, after all, to prefer to have him fascinated by me and in love with me rather than have merely his respectful admiration."

The conversation seemed to be assuming a rather personal trend, and he hastened to take advantage of it. Almost before either of them realized it, they found themselves exchanging confidences as to their views and opinions; and she met his with a sympathy and understanding that he had never found before — or since — in any woman. The situation was so piquant, so thoroughly delightful to both of them that they wanted to prolong it, and they both felt a shock of surprise that the time had passed so swiftly, when the girl, with a sudden start, called attention to the fact that the moon had almost sunk and in a very few minutes they would be in entire darkness.

"We must have talked two hours," she said guiltily. She gave a musical little giggle. "Talked to a burglar in the dead of the night two whole hours, attired in a blue negligee!"

"Does its being blue make the matter any worse?" he inquired flippantly.

"It's really not a joking matter, after all," said she, sobering a little. "It's almost pitch dark in here now, and you honestly must go right away."

He moved a little nearer.

"And not see your face?" he asked, in a low voice. "Can't I light the gas just once—just for a minute?"

"No, no! Please!" She caught his hand as it went toward his pocket for a match.

"Why not?" he begged. "Just one little glance! I know you're pretty as a picture. And this talk with you has been so wonderful—it's meant so much to me." His voice sank to a tone that many a woman before the blue negligee girl had found dangerously seductive. "Can you blame me for wanting to see you? For wanting to carry the memory of your sweet face with me?"

"No!" said the girl in an agitated voice. "I don't mean 'no' to the last question, but to your request. I don't want you to see my face any more clearly than you have or know my name or—or—anything! And I don't want to know anything about you, either. This has been wonderful to me, too. I've always had such a humdrum, ordinary kind of life; and I want this to seem always a mysterious, exciting, wonderful adventure. It will spoil it if I know your name and exactly how you look. Our futures can have nothing in common. You're romance—and mystery—for me, and I want you to stay that way."

Stirred by the excitement in her low tones, the perfume from her hair and her silken negligee, and, most of all, the unusual situation, he felt his pulses throb. Her speech too, appealed strongly to his own sense of romance and adventure. He drew nearer and laid his hand over hers.

"I must go then?" he murmured plaintively, without—" But he did not say what it was he must go without. He had been drawing her slowly toward him as he spoke and, finding that she did not resist, he ended his sentence with a kiss.

"This is goodby," she whispered; and she put her arms around his neck suddenly and gave him back his kiss.

So had ended the most romantic of his adventures—the one which gave him, in his later years, a sort of chuckling pleasure as he remembered it; and above all his other escapades, the one which Marjory—so charming, so lovable, so limited and conventional—must never know.

The blue negligee girl had been only a pleasing memory for more than thirty years, when a crushing disaster came upon him which, for the time being, shattered all his plans and for all time crippled his life's happiness. Marjory was killed in an automobile accident. The blow was so sudden and his loneliness and grief so complete that it was weeks before the bereaved husband gathered strength to go through her papers. It was a task at once sweet and sad. He found all the letters he had written to her before their marriage, tied with the traditional blue ribbon, in a drawer of her

desk which was dedicated to her special treasures. He remembered that she used to say laughingly that her desk was the one thing in the house that was really hers. She never allowed anyone to use it. Near the letters he found a little cedar box about which he had sometimes teased her—she had kept its secrecy determinedly inviolate; and he now opened it tenderly, feeling sure it contained various little trinkets of their courtship and their children's babyhood. She had been such a perfect wife and mother!

That he would find any relics of a past to which he did not belong, never occurred to him. She had told him before they were married that she had never had any other sweetheart or even fancied herself in love with any other man. Thus, with no forebodings, he lifted the lid of the little box she had treasured so carefully, and smiled with a sad satisfaction as he saw a tiny baby shoe and a little white baby cap. He took them out tenderly and the tears sprang to his eyes when he found underneath them a little kodak picture of himself and a pressed flower—also a memento of him. Other little things he found, all marking some phase of their married life or of the development of their children, and all, to him, deeply touching.

At the very bottom of the box he discovered a small rag of silk and two slips of paper. On one was the date of that long-ago night when he had told her that he loved her and had won her confession of love in return; and underneath this date was written: "Love came to me tonight." He lifted the paper to his lips, and looked at the other slip. The date on this one was August fifth, eighteen hundred and eighty; beneath, in his wife's delicate hand he read: "The most wonderful night of my life." August fifth, eighteen hundred and eighty!—a full year before she had even known him!

His first sensation of shocked incredulity was succeeded by a throb of jealousy. Why had Marjory never told him of "the most wonderful night of her life?" Who had helped to make it so memorable? The record had stayed unchanged even after the second slip was written—even after he had told her that he loved her. What did it mean? Did Marjory, too, have a past of which he knew nothing? Impossible! Dazed and unbelieving, he mechanically picked up the bit of blue silk in one corner of the box; and then, with heart beating to suffocation and every nerve in his body throbbing madly, he remembered what had happened on August fifth, eighteen hundred and eighty. For he saw that the silk was a faded blue and he read, on a scrap of paper pinned to one corner, "Aug. 5, 1880. A piece of the blue negligee I wore that night."

HUMOR, ADVENTURE, ROMANCE—you will find all three ingredients in the November BLACK CAT.

THE TRUMP CARD MITCH HELD

BY H. P. HOLT

Mitch was indicted for horse stealing in a country where the Grand Jury may consist of twelve men or the whole community and where witness fees are paid in friendship and the "makin's."

IF it so happens that you have never been in jail in some of the remote sections of Wyoming you cannot form a definite opinion of what the process is like. There are no clanking chains, no massive stone walls nor uniformed police twirling night-sticks. The term "in jail" is a technicality, insinuating, or rather definitely proving, that the sheriff has business with you which you cannot avoid.

The jail may consist of a ramshackle shack, the door of which you could burst open with a shoulder; or the door may even be open, so that you may sit at the entrance, smoke, and reflect upon your sins. If you don't know those parts, nor the customs, nor the temper of the people, it may look as though making a getaway were one degree easier than rolling down a sloping roof, but if you are wise you will forget that idea and spend your time trying to think out the best available alibi, for several ounces of lead travelling at an uncomfortable pace will surely encounter you in a tender spot if you make a serious attempt to cheat the local equivalent of law in that way.

Mitch was in jail at Pioche Peak when Dave Turner arrived there. Pioche Peak is a very long ride from anywhere, and so the sheriff justly considered that considerable discretion was left in his hands, an opinion in which everybody concerned usually concurred excepting any one who happened to be suffering for his indiscretions, but nobody minded him.

Mitch was leaning through an open window as Dave rode past. A couple of ranchers were doing nothing in particular a little distance away, but Mitch knew perfectly well what they would do if he tried any funny business, especially without a horse or a six-shooter. A faint sign of recognition passed over his features, and Dave slid out of the saddle.

Mitch was a little under the average height. His lower jaw had a habit of projecting slightly, his hair was inclined to be red, his face was rugged for the thirty odd years in which the world had known him, and he had a long nose crowned by a pair of blue eyes dotted with grey—eyes which one did not forget easily.

Dave had noticed those eyes particularly on two former occasions. One was when Mitch retired from being a ranch owner. He did so because somebody else held four aces to his full house. The other occasion was when he rode thirty-three miles to

camp, after being bitten by a diamond-back, to apply whisky as an antidote. He was still a little sleepy from the effects of the whisky three days afterward, but the snake bite had ceased to count. Considering he was not a drinking man, Mitch had tackled that whisky just as one would expect the owner of those grey-blue eyes to do when the situation was desperate.

"Been working around here lately?" Dave inquired diplomatically. Even in Pioche Peak it is not considered delicate to broach the subject of a man's misfortune, when it is such as Mitch's, in too blunt a fashion.

The prisoner shifted his position slightly.

"Do you recollect a little squirt called Freyne, who used to work on Terhune's ranch near Theresa?" he asked.

Dave remembered Freyne and nodded. Almost everyone who had come in contact with Freyne remembered him. He had an ingratiating way with women and no man would shake his hand.

"He says I stole his horse," said Mitch bluntly.

Dave emitted a soft whistle as a man does when greatly surprised. In the cattle country there are three offences which are considered to have earned one a quick burial. One is killing a man except in a fair fight, another is rustling steers, and the third is stealing another man's horse. It is so easy to get away with a horse in a section of the world where horses have to pick for themselves when they are not working, and a man without a horse is as useless as a fur overcoat in an unhappy hereafter, so it became necessary in the very earliest days to put restrictions on liberties of that kind. Dave's surprise, therefore, was not without reason.

"What's the popular feeling around here on the point?" he asked.

"They seem kind of divided," said Mitch calmly, considering his position. "About half of 'em want to see me gun-branded and the rest are hanging out for a funeral. The sheriff is away and the foreman has threatened to drop anyone who starts in on the execution before he gives the word 'go.'"

The alternatives before Mitch were death in an unattractive form, or eternal disgrace. When a man is gun-branded his forehead is more or less neatly decorated with crosses drawn with the sharp edge of a revolver sight. After the wounds heal the man is a pariah. Only blind folk will talk to him, for it is known that he has been guilty of an unpardonable offense against his fellowmen and he cannot hide it. He might be the best rider west of the Mississippi, but nobody would employ him.

Dave stroked his chin reflectively.

"Anybody know you around here?" he asked. It is an advantage for an honest man, on such occasions, to have a friend or two, unless the evidence is too strong. In this case there was only Mitch's word against that of Freyne, and Freyne was not unknown at Pioche Peak. He had been away a month and when he came back on foot, declaring his new horse had been stolen, there was a general turn out, for though nobody liked Freyne, nobody liked the idea of a horse-thief getting away. When Mitch was roped

in the case against him certainly looked black.

"There isn't a mother's son here ever set eyes on me before," said Mitch, "barrin' Freyne. But there's an old score between him and me, see?"

"Oh-h," said Dave thoughtfully. "That's how things is. Matter of business, eh?"

"No. A girl," replied Mitch; and Dave nodded his wise old head understandingly. He was beginning to see daylight. One never really knows the true character of the next man on a ranch, but Dave had sized Mitch up long ago. Besides, Mitch had once done something big for Dave, who owned a large heart and knew the meaning of the word gratitude.

"I kinda feel I'd like to take a hand in this," he said, "but what can I do?" That's the point."

The blue eyes dotted with grey changed their expression, as they did when Mitch's mind was working hard.

"There's one man whose word would go a long way," he said, "and that's Pete Jefferson. You remember him, don't you? He was on Terhune's ranch the same time we were."

"Yes, I locate him all right," replied Dave, "but where is he now? He left there in the fall. And where does he come in on this outfit, anyway?"

"Pete would tell them the pony never belonged to Freyne, and I don't know anyone else who would be more useful. Someone on Terhune's place may have heard where he is. That's the best I can suggest. I'd sure hate to be gun-marked. Don't know but what —but what the other wouldn't be no worse. Freyne is tearin' his hair and hollerin' for the chance of jumping on my grave, but the foreman isn't one of these all-fired shoot-me-quicks, and he says I'm to have free board and lodging till this afternoon so that we'll all be sure of getting a square deal."

While the two men were talking, a number of ranchers approached, arguing noisily. Freyne was with them and appeared to be excited. He had evidently been stirring up the pace of the lagging law, for the foreman held in his hand a long rope, strong enough to bear the weight of two men if necessary.

"This is where I quit," said Mitch. His face lost a shade of its tan, but otherwise he gave no outward sign of the fact that he knew he was doomed.

A glance at the men showed Dave they were intent on getting the thing over without further delay. The foreman eyed the old man keenly.

"I guess you'll take a stroll," he said in a pointed way. "We've no use for strangers around here just now."

Dave met the foreman's eyes squarely.

"I don't want to butt into any of your private affairs," he said with deliberation, endeavoring not to rouse resentment, "and if you say so I'll hike, but right here I want to tell you I can prove this man Mitch isn't a horse-thief if you'll give me a fair chance."

"Who are you, anyway?"

"My name is Dave Turner. I'm twice your age, and I've seen quite a number of men get their deserts in my time. Hangin' is right and proper when it is right and proper, but no-

body feels better for hangin' an innocent man."

There was a quiet dignity about Dave which could not be ignored, but the veteran's words seemed to stir Freyne up to a degree of hysteria.

"You shut up," said the foreman brusquely, addressing Freyne. "Well, Turner, and how might you prove he is innocent? He was caught with the goods, and, though I'll give any man a square deal at his own obsequies, I don't see how anything you can say will make much difference."

"It's up to you whether you get on with this hangin' right now or not," said Dave, "but I warn you, whether Mitch is dead or alive, I'll fetch a man into this camp by the end of the week to prove what I say."

"Who?" screamed Freyne.

"Pete Jefferson."

A curious change came over Freyne's face. For a moment he was at a loss for words. Clearly this was a complication on which he had not reckoned.

"Do you mean Big Pete—him with the scar over his left eye?" asked the foreman.

"That's him," put in Mitch, who so far had been a silent spectator.

"Pete Jefferson is no friend of horse thieves," said the foreman, "and if he's got anything to say I allow I'd like the boys to hear it. But he isn't here."

"Will you give me till Saturday morning to find him?" asked Dave. "If I fail you can string Mitch up then if you like. That's fair."

The ranchers were somewhat subdued. Fiercely though they hated a horse-thief they had not the least intention of killing unjustly. They were only anxious to obey the old-time, unwritten law of the cattle country.

"You can call that a deal. You've got till Saturday morning," declared the foreman; and no voice was raised in dissent except that of Freyne who, however, was ignored.

"I'll get Pete here if he's to be found," said Dave quietly, turning to the man in jail, "and as there's quite a piece of a ride in front of me I guess this is where I start."

"Say," observed Mitch, "there's one thing I want to tell you, Dave. If you do happen to find him don't forget to tell him it is Freyne who is putting this across me."

Dave was just turned sixty, but his frame retained most of the splendid vitality that had helped him in his younger days to earn his reputation as a rider. But even to get to Theresa and back before Saturday was a serious proposition. How much farther he might have to go was problematical. He swung out of Pioche at the steady lope at which the western horses travel long distances best. Occasionally he spoke a word of encouragement to the willing beast under him; most of the time he stared straight ahead, thinking hard. Upon him rested the responsibility of the life of a fellow man, a man for whom he had a peculiar regard. If Pete Jefferson was far away from Terhune's ranch Mitch would dangle from the end of a rope or be gun-branded, and as likely as not Mitch would choose the former. Of his own horse Dave felt sure, but if Pete Jefferson's mount could not do sixty miles a day in that heat, and keep it up, Mitch

would stand a very thin chance. If—

Dave ran his fingers through his stubbly beard. There was far too much "if" about it to please him. In a long career he had seen men end their days in a variety of ways, but he personally had never been placed in quite such a delicate position in the affair. He covered seventy miles during the first twenty-four hours, knowing, even as he rode the last hour, that he was taxing the pony beyond its reasonable limit of endurance. The second day he had to pay for it by stopping after going sixty, when the horse began to stumble. Borrowing another animal, he rode on to Theresa, and without ceremony sought an interview with Terhune.

"Pete Jefferson," said the ranch-owner. "Yes, I can put you right on to him. He's working for Winpole, 'bout fifty miles this side of Pioche."

Dave did not try to stifle sundry exclamations that rose to his lips, and, with curiosity, "Boss" Terhune watched the flying figure disappear in a cloud of dust on the trail he had just come by.

Mortifying though it was for Dave to learn that he had come so much farther than was necessary, he had the satisfaction of knowing that Pete, even if he left Wimpole's place at sundown on Friday, could reach Pioche before it was too late. When the old man picked up his own animal again it was fresh after the rest, and Dave pushed on well into the night. He spared neither himself nor the horse until he arrived at his destination just before noon on Friday.

Pete Jefferson, he was informed there, was rounding up cattle several miles away, but was expected back in the evening. The task of finding him before then was hopeless, for the ranch was a very large one and two men could hunt for each other for days without success.

Grinding his teeth at the delay, Dave forced himself to rest, and not until he had flung himself down did he realize how great was his exhaustion. It seemed only a few minutes afterward, though it was in reality six hours, when someone awoke him.

"Want to see me? My name's Jefferson," said a man standing by his side.

"Why, yes. I've come a little ways with that idee," said Dave. "You rec'lect Mitch, the red-headed guy who used to work for Terhune?"

"Mitch? Yes, I know him," replied Pete after a pause. "What's wrong with him?"

"Oh, nothing. At least nothing is wrong now, but they're going to string him up at Pioche Peak in about twelve hours."

"String Mitch up!" Pete exclaimed. "Has he been doing some shooting?"

"Nope," said Dave. "They allow he's stolen a horse from a feller called Freyne, and Mitch said you'd be the only one who could show how it couldn't be."

"Freyne, eh?" observed Pete in a queer voice. "I sure thought that feller must have been filled up with bullet holes by now. We'd better get a move on."

Just as the moon was rising, they started out on the last stage of Dave's long ride. Pete said very little, replying only in monosyllables when the other man addressed him. He was

fully occupied with his thoughts. Soon after midnight they rested their weary horses for a couple of hours and then kept in the saddle without a break until they made Pioche.

"Glad to see you," said Mitch, with a quaint smile, still in his one-horse prison. "If you two will go right along to the foreman and get your business over, I'll take it as a favor." For a man who was doomed to die within a few hours, he was noticeably unperturbed.

Dave and his companion sought out the foreman.

"'Bout this guy you're going to kill," Pete began. "I'd just like to have a peek at the animal he's said to have stole."

The horse, hobbled, was nibbling grass near, and the trio went over to inspect him. He had an odd white fetlock and an obliterated brand.

"Um-m," observed Pete at once. "Mitch has owned that hoss for four years. If you want to do any gun-marking I should choose the man who said Mitch is a thief."

The foreman tilted his broad hat and scratched his head.

"Can't do that—now," he said. "I don't mind telling you I've had a hunch all along that there was something queer about it."

"But why can't you gun-mark the other little guy?"

"He's lit out of this region," replied the foreman, "and I don't fancy we shall see him around here again. Freyne went off on Tuesday as soon as Dave Turner rode out to find you—just slid away, quiet like, without saying a word to anyone."

A little later two men rode away from Pioche Peak. One was Mitch and the other was Dave Turner. The Westerner is not gushing in his manner. Mitch had put out his hand and shaken that of the old man. Both understood the thanks conveyed thereby, and nothing more was said, done, or expected. Mitch was glad to be alive still and Dave was pleased to have been able to return a service.

"I was only afraid you might forget to mention Freyne's name to Pete Jefferson," said Mitch as they jogged along. "You see, it all depended on that."

"How? I don't seem to have got the hang of that, quite," remarked Dave.

"Well, y'see, Pete mightn't have remembered me," Mitch explained. "I had only met him a time or two. But he knows Freyne. Two years ago there was some cattle rustling at a ranch Pete Jefferson had then, and Freyne was in it. But Freyne was slick, and though the evidence wasn't strong enough to shoot him they had a good idee that he was in it, and they found out more afterward. Pete was mighty sore and I guessed he'd come a mile or two to get even with Freyne."

"Pity he didn't succeed," Dave commented.

"He did," said Mitch cheerfully. "Didn't he scare the little squirt out of camp, an' haven't I got Freyne's horse?"

"But Pete said that had been your horse for four years."

"Well, you see," said Mitch with a smile, "Pete is a wee bit prejudiced against Freyne and a horse like this is too good for a skunk like him anyway."

THE DISINTERMENT OF MOSES

BY JEAN LE GRO BISSON

The reporter in this story thought that Moses should be preserved instead of being slowly and painlessly consumed by crawling things. Probably he had Arthur Brisbane's freak heading, "Be kind to poor Moses—he had no ice box," pasted over his desk.

OF an evening early in the week, I dined with Nappe at Pinta's. My mission in life is that of a third-rate college professor, whose ambitions have been eliminated one by one until now I aspire only to membership in the Tavern Club. Being a third-rater at a commensurate salary, I must forego even that pleasure for a while longer. Nappe is a shabby, disreputable journalist, whose existence is a compound of Faith, Hope and Green Chartreuse; and the greatest of these is Green Chartreuse. He divides his time between "Lower Ten" at police headquarters and our table at Pinta's. I hasten to explain that the cuisine at Pinta's is excellent, surpassed only by the excellence of the waitresses. I refer especially to Horatia, who hovers always over our table in the alcove.

It was at the arrival of the Crème Yvette that Nappe remarked the fact of my being in evening clothes. Six o'clock dressers are frowned upon at Pinta's. The dinner jacket is a sneer at the proletariat. To appear in full dress is indecent and insulting. Thus apropos of my bosom, scintillating in immaculate linen and fifty cent shirt studs, he said:

"I wondered why Horatia had on her party dress tonight. She didn't know how she was going to get off to see the Governor lead the grand march with Mary Pickford at the annual ball of the movie stars until my eminently respectable friend, the professor, came along to emulate the low-necked vest contingent."

"Horatia," I retorted, "is a connoisseur of men. In the present case, she displays an enviable amount of judgment. And as for the professor, he should be allowed a certain latitude in frivolous affairs inasmuch as he has yet to annex a Ph. D."

I was frankly amazed that he should connect Horatia's party dress and my evening clothes with the Third Annual Ball of the Moving Picture Actors and Actresses. It had been my intention to surprise him, at least to stimulate his envy; for he is not above casting an approving glance at Horatia.

But I was denied that pleasure. He was, he declared, greatly disappointed in me. More than that, he was the least bit disgusted to see me playing the part of a rubber door mat with "Welcome" written all over me and a pair of satin pumps—Horatia's—holding me down. He dwelt exhaustively on the proper conduct of an old college professor, which was rather

unkind as I will be only twenty-nine next August. His English was characteristically vigorous, and his similes superlatively sarcastic. I gathered that he had counted on me to play the understudy in a real adventure.

Now it has rarely been my pleasure to be with Nappe when he was on a big story. His real adventures generally degenerate into nothing more than a game of chess with one of the house men at headquarters.

"On with the dance," I quoted.

"Very well," he said, rising, "but I warn you that you will bask in the reflected light of greater stars than yourself. Horatia will be so preoccupied hitching her wagon to an alleged star that the dull professor in the dress suit of last season's cut will have an excellent opportunity to canvass the smoking room for the principal parts of the verb to love."

This likewise failed to dissuade me. You see Horatia is not of the common or garden variety. She is what the story writer, groping with neither lantern nor thesaurus, would describe as "an indefinable something," while yet not answering to the companion expression "something intangible." Indefinable she may be, but never intangible. She is, in fact, the sum total and the last word, quite desirable as the girl I wanted to love and cherish and translate from a world of mixed drinks and relations and Gorgonzola to the little world of the white bassinet with blue ribbons.

When finally we parted, it was with the understanding that we should meet there again at midnight. Then, if I were so disposed, I might accompany him on what he was pleased to call an adventure "in streets of the silent city."

Nappe was right. Horatia treated me shamefully at the ball; that is, she allowed me only nine dances and an extra. The remainder went to a simpering idiot with a film face, who had probably never got further in stock than playing leads in "Lena Rivers" and "East Lynn." On the whole, I was rather glad upon my return to Pinta's to find there a note from Nappe instructing me to call at his office before 1:30 o'clock.

And pinned to the corner of the sheet upon which it was written was a death notice clipped from a newspaper, reading:

DOHERTY—In Boston, Dec. 1, Moses Doherty of Des Moines, Iowa, aged 82 years. Requiem High Mass will be celebrated at the St. John's church, Lynn, Monday at 9 o'clock, A. M.

There was a wealth of suggestion in this ingenious device of Nappe's. At once it recalled to my mind the phrase, "in streets of the silent city," which he had used earlier in the evening. Somewhere, at sometime, I had heard this phrase used with reference to a cemetery.

In evening dress, just as I had come from the dance, I went forth and presently located him in the news room of his paper, where, from the top of a desk, he was solemnly regarding the world through volumes of smoke from a pipe as black as the night outside.

"I'll give you a few details while we are making the journey to the scene of the night's adventure," he said. Then he slid from the desk and entered a telephone booth to call up police headquarters.

A drizzling rain had set in when we

descended to the street a few minutes later and entered a waiting automobile which Nappe had chartered for the occasion. As I climbed in, one foot came in contact with something hard which gave forth a metallic ring. Nappe flashed the light from a small pocket lamp, revealing to my astonished gaze a shovel, pickaxe and jimmy, horribly suggestive of what was to come.

"Merely a mild experiment in agriculture," he explained, "a sort of 'back to the soil' movement." Then he proceeded to disclose the character of our expedition, which, for being out of the beaten track, surpassed any expectations I may have had.

"Body-snatching is the greatest of professions," said he. "It entails no end of amusement and excitement for the red-corpuscled man, not to mention the financial results, which are highly satisfactory. This newspaper game, you know, is all right for a time, but it soon loses its fascination. Every ham reporter has to have some secret diversion. With some its a woman, with others it takes the milder form of writing short stories and moving picture scenarios. You will readily see that to a person of my temperament and adventurous spirit, the business of the cheerful grave opener offers vast possibilities."

This preliminary statement, calculated to congeal the blood in my veins, was rather a failure. Nappe is not always veracious. His so-called temperament is as well suited to the role of the cheerful liar as to that of the cheerful grave opener. I listened in amused tolerance.

"You may wonder," he continued, "that I have no qualms of conscience when robbing a grave. Any doubts I may entertain as to the nicety of the calling are stifled with the thought that the scientists would know a great deal less about the human machine were it not for the boys who produce the bodies upon which they experiment.

"Do not confuse me with the little fellow who opens graves for a few petty trinkets. His method is amateurish, in fact, crude. His process of reasoning, which he considers very astute, tells him that the hock shops are all here, not in the hereafter, and that a corpse can have no possible use for ornaments. His reward is small, considering the risk he takes. People do not leave jewelry on the dear departed these days, except perhaps a plain gold ring or a lodge emblem.

"The big men in the profession are distinctly apart from these petty thieves. They have to take greater chances, such as removing whole bodies of various organs of a body. For this they are well paid. But it requires a great deal of skill in these operations, involving systematic methods and nerves of iron. And at this traffic in corpses, they work together for their own mutual benefit and protection."

I caught a questioning glance from Nappe, as if he were trying to note the effect of his recital upon me. But I was as impassive as the Sphinx in the desert, or the traffic policeman who stands at the foot of Joy street.

"That will do at present for the ethics of the profession," Nappe concluded. "Now what I want you to do is to stay by me tonight while I crack

a sealed casket and remove all that is mortal of the remains. It may be the last pillaging expedition I shall ever make to a cemetery."

While Nappe had been acquainting me with the workings of a craft of which he professed to be a devotee, we had passed through a part of Cambridge and Somerville and had struck the boulevard which leads to Revere Beach and Lynn. For some time, I had been nervously aware of another automobile behind us, which seemed, since it kept at about the same distance, to be following us. Once or twice I had glanced out through the little square of glass in the back of our machine and noted that the other car was one of those bus-like affairs that ply the trade of the jitney. Now as I looked again, its lights were barely distinguishable in the distance, and concluded it was not on our trail.

With relief I sat back and thought with no little amusement of what Nappe termed the ethics of the profession. The task before us lost none of its gruesomeness, albeit the informal aspect of our contemplated act was swept away before the influx of admiration for Nappe which suffused my entire being and beclouded my sense of the fitness of things. My contract with society was forgotten. As for Nappe, he betrayed no more emotion than when studying the list of entrées at Pinta's. His manner quite belied the suspicion that he was perpetrating a joke.

A little more than an hour from the time of starting, we reached our destination. The parish cemetery of the church of St. John is an old one and is situated close by the church near the center of the city. It is larger than the average burying ground found within the business section of a city and the greater part of it is upon rising ground.

Nappe gave the driver instructions to wait there and to make some show of tinkering with the engine for the benefit of any phlegmatic patrolman who chanced to be prowling about. Evidently this driver was well paid or had been pressed into service on similar excursions for he accepted his orders without question.

A six-foot wall ran along half the frontage of the cemetery to the right of the gate. From this wall, the ground rose abruptly with an outcropping of ledge in one or two places. Inside the cemetery to the right of the main path, this rising ground was terraced; and in the first of these terraces was a large receiving tomb and a row of private tombs extending almost to the middle of the cemetery. We passed through the gate and moved off in the darkness and rain. Beyond the last of the tombs, we turned and proceeded for a short distance along a side path. There, in a lonely spot in the shadow of a clump of trees, we came upon a freshly made grave.

With only a glance at his watch by a flash from his pocket lamp, Nappe went to work to uncover the pine box buried there. He employed no light and needed none, for the outline of the grave was easily discernible, the sod not having been laid. For my part, I pulled my top coat more tightly about me and shivered.

Hardly had the work begun, when, as I crouched by a white shaft,

I saw, or thought I saw, a figure dodging among the trees a few rods away. My love for adventure was at once succeeded by the desire to run, to run madly through that cemetery and leave that uncanny figure behind. I looked at Nappe silently at work with the shovel, and was of a mind to warn him that we were being watched; but I knew that he would only laugh at me, would attribute the watcher among the trees to an imagination made vivid by fright. Now was I convinced of the folly of being a fool, at loss as to the course I should pursue, afraid to stay and as much afraid to run, so I cowered there in the rain and shivered, kneeling upon the wet ground trying to penetrate the shadows for another sight of the figure.

Soon came the sound of the shovel scraping on the pine box. Nappe's head and shoulders were just visible as he threw out the last few shovelfuls of wet clay. He motioned me to crawl over to the grave, then flashed the rays of the pocket lamp which he told me to direct upon the coffin.

"A trick of the trade," he explained, "to do without a light until the hole is deep enough to hide one."

He took a screw-driver from his pocket and began taking out the screws. When this was done, it was necessary to make use of the jimmy, for the lid of the casket was of the sliding variety, and there was no room to permit its sliding back.

The engraving upon the coffin stood out clearly in the light from the lamp:

MOSES DOHERTY
1833 1915

The siren strains of the wind, whining and screeching through the trees, breathed an awful harmony in perfect accord with the revolting horror of the scene. It would fall to a low moaning, a funereal wail, again rising in weird, blood-curdling shrieks.

The effect upon me was such as I had never before experienced, a feeling of revulsion which sent me shrinking from this outraged mansion of death.

Of a certainty, Nappe was either drunk or demented. None but an abnormal, diseased mind could conceive so fiendish a piece of work as he was carrying out, deliberately and with such apparent lack of feeling. And I was no less than his accomplice in this despoiling of a sanctuary, as I suddenly realized.

Yet I stayed. However strong the inclination to run, there was still the morbid desire to look upon the face of the dead man in the coffin. After a glance about me, I looked once more over the edge of the grave. As I did so, some of the gravel under one foot caved in; I slipped, lost my balance, and fell with a thud upon the lower end of the coffin. Thoroughly frightened, imagining that I had been precipitated into the hole by human agency, I scrambled out and would have left Nappe alone with the corpse had he not forcibly restained me.

He closely scanned the trees and shrubbery and sought to assure a panicky professor that no invisible watcher was hiding in the shadows. Then he proceeded to remove the coffin lid. It came off easily enough, and I inhaled a peculiar odor, quite unlike the putrescence emanating from a body in the first stages of decomposition.

Instead of the face of a man, calm and composed in death, I looked down upon a casket full of little boxes, small lamps and small needle-like instruments.

"Well, Nappe," said somebody behind me, in a voice that was oddly familiar.

I glanced once in the direction of the voice and saw the uniformed figure of a police captain towering there among the grave stones. I ran,—wildly and with absolutely no sense of direction,—colliding forcibly with trees and shrubs in my haste. In my salad days, I had never traversed a cinder track beset with hurdles as I now ran through that maze of granite slabs. I came out upon the knoll above the receiving tomb and plunged down the embankment. Somewhere between the top and the bottom, I lost my footing and rolled to the top of the stone wall and crashed at full length upon the granolithic sidewalk. The whole cosmos was awhirl for one brief moment, and than I achieved that state of "nothingness" into which the poet, in a careless moment, guaranteed that a thing of beauty should not sink.

Some hours later, I returned to consciousness, felt of my throbbing and bandaged head and made the astounding discovery that I was in Nappe's room. Nappe himself, looking weary and fatigued, sat nodding in a chair by the window with the morning editions strewn about him.

"'Beer I bring to thee,'" said Nappe, indulging his passion for famous first lines as he brought me tea and toast. "And I suppose now you would like to know what was in that coffin and how it happens that we are here instead of languishing in jail."

He filled his pipe and seated himself upon the foot of the bed, while I drank the tea as swiftly as possible without scalding my esophagus.

"It is certainly rich," he began, "the way the profound omniscience, I might say sophistication, of an old professor faded before the gentle fiction of the alleged ethics of an imaginary profession. Here are the post mortem facts, if they will aid your digestion any. Hop Doherty, a relative of the deceased, is a notorious opium smuggler. Officials of the Port of Boston 'wised up' to the fact that he had recently received a consignment of opium to be used in the illegal traffic which they have been endeavoring to stamp out. At about the same time, Hop was tipped that the Custom's officials were going to jump on him. So he considered the advisability of a funeral. He put the opium and layouts in a casket, called it Mr. Moses Doherty, a visiting relative, bribed a disreputable undertaker and a doctor to sign the death certificate, and cried copiously over the late Moses at High Mass of Requiem yesterday at nine o'clock. The officials raided him, but found no evidence of a character sufficient to warrant an arrest.

"The interment at Lynn was a suspicious circumstances which Hop overlooked. Telegrams to the parish clerks of the Des Moines Catholic churches and the Des Moines City Clerk brought the information that Hop's grandfather Moses had never survived the Second Battle of Bull Run.

"We simply beat them to it by disinterring the remains. In that casket was opium galore, not to mention lay-

outs consisting of hop toys, bamboo pipes, scales for weighing the charges of opium, fairy lamps, and yen hocs. The captain at headquarters followed us in the auto-patrol with the Federal officers, the state police, the local constabulary, and about everybody else except the Plattsburg patriots and the Boy Scouts. They have confiscated the stuff."

I absorbed this along with a last mouthful of dry toast. And I demanded to know why he hadn't told me this before and saved me a bad tumble.

"Yes, I suppose I might," he answered. "And I might have told you that Horatia and I have decided to explore together the higher branches of co-education, which would have saved you the price of two ball tickets."

Meet Hazard and O'Chance in the November number. They are a precious pair of comedians who live in ease and sometimes affluence with all the world, including New Jersey, for a stage. Their philosophy is simple: We were born to be gentlemen, society made us criminals, therefore, we will collect from society with the aid of Providence and some trick cards. Read HAZARD AND O'CHANCE: LIGHT COMEDY, *by F. W. Dever.*

THE LONE WOLF RETURNS

BY WALTER THENRY

One rather expects to meet tarantulas in Wall Street, the kind that wear regular clothes and collect old masters. But the giant spiders from Jamaica that extract one's ego with a single bite, should not be permitted to roam the streets.

THE equanimity of that redoubtable set of operators known to the financial world as the Circle had been disturbed; fluctuations of mysterious origin were occurring in the market, with disastrous effect to those who were wont to make the fluctuations. Never since the days of Stubbs had the market undergone such fortune-building, fortune-smashing changes. And Stubbs's body had been decaying three years in a Jamaica jungle where the tiger tarantulas reach a length of eight inches and—keep on growing.

Around the mahogany table of the luxurious clubroom sat the Circle. Bondai, the steel king, with the obesity of a bloated rhinoceros and the eyes of a ferret, pushed his plate away with a grunt. Oku, the sleek valet and kitchen supervisor, allowed the obliquity of his slitted eyes to increase by the imperceptible part of an inch. In American stocks he had no interest, but he prided himself upon being a good cook. In his mind he tongue-lashed Tosho of the kitchen staff with true Japanese severity. Fenniman, whose hobby was wheat, but whose heart was flint of the hardest variety, still toyed idly with a spoon over his dessert, while Thurston, representing the copper combine, and Eisenbaum, that brainy Jew popularly known among his victims as the "man who gives no quarter," nourished their choice Havanas with an uncalled-for savageness. Westley, least wealthy and most human, alone retained his normal composure, and it was at his signal that Oku, that soft-footed son of the East, quickly, in his mysterious way, conveyed the dishes from the room.

"It has got to be stopped, gentlemen," announced Eisenbaum in his crisp executive.

In characteristic ways they signified their acquiescence. Thurston hitched up in his chair and nodded nervously; Fenniman bowed his gray-flecked head gravely. At Bondai's grunt Westley smiled inscrutably.

"First let us find out where we stand," continued the oily Jew. "To begin with I have lost two hundred thousand myself today."

"Three hundred and fifty here," chimed Thurston. "If it keeps up tomorrow it will finish me."

"Three hundred even." This from Fenniman.

"Two hundred eighty," snorted Bondai, who was worth at least twenty-five million.

"I'm under a lucky star," smiled

Westley. "Only ten here."

"You see," said Eisenbaum, "our combined losses for today amount to more than a million. Unless this is stopped by tomorrow the Circle will be smashed. If we only knew this combine working against us!"

"It seems to me more like the work of one man than of a combine. Reminds me of the days of Stubbs," was Thurston's comment.

"Incidentally, you gentlemen might like to know that tonight is the third anniversary of Stubbs's—condemnation," suggested Westley.

Bondai, who had been largely influential in that deal, started violently. "The deuce it is!"

"Fact," said Westley, the only one who had refused to take part in the ousting of Stubbs three years ago.

"If I didn't know for a certainty that the fellow's carcass is rotting in Jamaica I should suspect that he was engineering this deal to wipe us out. The thing is being done by his methods." This from Fenniman.

"This fight against the Circle," said Westley, with a tightening smile, "*is* being directed by one man. I was talking with him today. But—" checking the interruptions with a motion—"at his request I promised not to divulge his name till eight o'clock tonight."

All eyes sought the clock on the wall, which stood at two minutes of eight.

"It has been suggested," continued Westley unmoved, "that the methods that are being used against us are similar to Stubbs's. Supposing, gentlemen, I were to tell you that your plan to get rid of Stubbs three years ago failed. Supposing that I were to tell you at the end of two minutes that the driving force behind this game *is* Stubbs? What then?"

"Rotten time for a joke," snarled Eisenbaum, who broke the forty seconds' silence following Westley's remark.

The biting sarcasm missed its mark; Westley was gravely consulting his watch which stood at eight o'clock.

"Gentlemen," he said, the ghost of a smile lurking about the corners of his mouth, "it gives me great pleasure to introduce as the principal speaker of the evening—Mr. Randolph C. Stubbs."

While he was speaking, the door had opened and a man entered. Tall, wiry, browned unmercifully by a tropical sun, he faced the astounded group before him. The high forehead hinted chivalry and knighthood far back among his progenitors, but the wide-set gray eyes, reflecting the flashes of a wonderful brain beneath, were coldly cruel, revealing a fixity of purpose underlying that calm immobility. A mouth, fashioned for smiles, showed no mirth now, but rather an unreasoning determination. About his person lurked the magnetic air of the master. He commanded his audience. At his entrance no one spoke. The red of Bondai's face had grown a shade more purple; Thurston hitched up in his chair once with a nervous start; the others tensely waited.

"Gentlemen," said Stubbs;—his voice, harsh and throaty, grated unpleasantly on the ears; his eyes belied his words; "Westley has informed me that the purpose of this meeting tonight was to discuss the conditions of

the market. He has been kind enough to invite me to come and express my views on the subject. He flatters me. Before I go into stocks, however, I should like to tell you a story. In part it is known to you all."

Bondai rose from his seat and waddled toward the door. With a stride, the lithe Stubbs was there before him and, without so much as a glance at the frustrated fat man, locked the door, pocketed the key, and continued his narrative.

"If you recollect, gentlemen, three years ago tonight the market was in a similar condition. The Circle was on the verge of being wiped out. Because one man refused to join you in your schemes of fraud you united forces and resolved to crush him. It was five to one—or rather four to one, for one of your crowd had some sense of justice. It was only another example of the pack against the lone wolf. In this case, however, it was the lone wolf that had you all by the throat. Seeing that you could never crush him by fair means you resorted to foul. You framed a deal in which there were millions for you, but only death for the Lone Wolf. Here that fighter made his first mistake. Having never known such foul, underhand methods he did not realize that such things could exist among men. He took your bait and went to Jamaica, ostensibly on a banana deal. There your paid servants met him and he was conducted into an unknown wilderness where the tarantulas are the thickest in the world—and forsaken."

As the speaker paused the telephone bell tinkled softly. Stubbs picked up the receiver.

"Hello! Yes, Mr. Bondai is here, but you cannot speak to him now. He is busy. Well, who is this speaking, please? Ramona!" (Stubbs's face grew half a shade paler.) "You cannot speak to Mr. Bondai now." (Stubbs's lips compressed with a jerk.) "No, this is not Mr. Thurston speaking. This is Randolph C. Stubbs!" The receiver clicked on the hook.

"To resume our tale, gentlemen," said the speaker gravely, "there was not one chance in a million of the Lone Wolf ever seeing God's country again. But he was a fighter; he took the million-and-one chance—and won! I shan't attempt to describe the horror of those days in Jamaica when the Lone Wolf saw spiders, felt spiders, slept with spiders, and was almost forced to eat spiders! Any one who has not seen those giant six-inch tarantulas could not appreciate it. Suffice it to say that those few weeks in that infernal spider-infested country took ten years out of the life of the man. When the Lone Wolf finally came back he found that the Circle had broken him in the market. He found —and this was the hardest blow of all —that one of the Circle had taken his wife! Gentlemen, the Lone Wolf loved his wife."

Bondai moved restlessly in his chair. Stubbs proceeded.

"Do you wonder then, gentlemen, that the Lone Wolf began to hate? That he became filled with all the hatred that is possible for man to conceive? Perhaps some of the venom of the spiders he had been associated with so long had entered his brain. One thing possessed him, heart and soul, and that was retribution to the Circle.

So the Lone Wolf struggled and worked unknown and alone. Today he has control of the market. Again he has the Circle by the throat, but this time there will be no failure. Tomorrow the Circle will be completely and irrevocably crushed!"

"Meester Stubbs," called a voice from behind the panels of the locked door.

Stubbs unlocked the door and admitted a sleek, brown-hued West Indian, evidently his valet and body servant, who whispered a few words in his ear.

"Show her in," Stubbs commanded.

A beautiful woman entered and, spying Stubbs, threw herself into his arms, sobbing.

"Oh, Rand," she cried, "it is all a hideous mistake. I love only you. I knew when I heard your voice through the telephone. I hate Bondai. I love you with my heart, body, and soul. Oh, Rand, please give me another chance. You would if you knew how I love you. God, how I love you!"

Stubbs disengaged her arms from about his neck, and all the hatred he could muster from the depths of his soul found outlet through his icy gray eyes. When he spoke his voice froze the hearers with its cold, deliberate hate.

"If there is anything in the world I despise more than a traitor," said he slowly, "it is a traitress and unfaithful wife."

The woman fainted. Bondai half rose from his seat.

"Sit down!" commanded Stubbs. And Bondai sat down.

"Moro, take this lady out and bring in the box." Silently the Indian departed upon his errand, while Stubbs again took the floor.

"Gentlemen, I apologize for this interruption. As I was saying, the Circle will be smashed tomorrow—"

"Perhaps," sneered Eisenbaum.

"And for good," finished Stubbs, unheeding the interruption.

The Indian had re-entered with a large box which he placed on the table before Stubbs.

"But," continued that gentleman, "with this much the Lone Wolf is not satisfied. From him you have taken not only money and wife *but ten years of his life*. He cannot take your wives, but he can take *ten years of every man's life*. The one man who defended his cause three years ago will alone be excepted.

"In this box I have two tarantulas," Stubbs placed his hand on the cover of the box. He was covered simultaneously with three shining revolvers. To these he paid no attention, but made a motion to open the box. A series of dull clicks followed in quick succession, and, for the first time that evening, Stubbs allowed himself to smile.

"Gentlemen," he confided, "Moro's virtues were first brought to my attention in a very disagreeable way. I discovered that he had picked my pocket. His other valuable qualities revealed themselves later. Incidentally, I might mention that he has a perfectly marvelous knowledge of tarantulas.

"Well, to go back to business; what I propose to do is this. The gentleman I have mentioned before, and myself, will leave the room with Moro in charge. Outside, we will unscrew the

plugs so as to leave the room in a convenient darkness. Meanwhile, Moro will entertain you with a short discourse on the traits of tarantulas. When he thinks you sufficiently educated in this line, he will open the box and let out the two tiger tarantulas contained within. In the morning Moro will return the spiders to their box. You see, gentlemen, I wish to give you a few of the thrills you gave me in Jamaica. But remember, that in no way will your test be so severe as mine. You have only two spiders to contend with while I had two thousand. You have to endure it for only one night while I had three weeks. You will have the benefit of Moro's knowledge, which I had not. Gentlemen, I wish you all pleasant dreams. Good night."

Westley and Stubbs passed out of the room, leaving Moro to turn the key in the lock behind them. In a minute, the lights had gone out leaving the room in total darkness. Thurston essayed a scream, but failed.

"De meester must not do dat," reproved the Indian. "De tiger spiders not like noise. Dey bite de man what make de noise. Dey no sting de man what keep ver', ver' still. Dey no like de man what walk. Dey bite heem in de leg."

"See here," said Eisenbaum, after trying the telephone in vain, "there's no use in your doing this. I'll give you a thousand dollars to keep those infernal things in the box and let us out of here. Come, what do you say?"

"Dat's ver' much money, meester," said the nigger, "but you no got heem. Meester Stubbs, say de market he go broke and you no got money."

"Here it is in my hand, you fool," said the irritated Jew.

"You no fool me, meester. Dat's bad money. Meester Stubbs say you got no money and Meester Stubbs he no lie."

The Jew cursed.

"God!" muttered Fenniman.

"R'memb'," said the Indian, "when I open de box and let out de spiders, be ver' careful when de spiders make click-clack noise; dat means dey are ver' mad. De man what make no noise and keep ver' still he no get bite. De man what speak and walk he get terr'bl' bite and die, oh, so horr'bl'. Now keep ver', ver' still. I open de box."

They heard him fumble with the cover and then their hearts stood still. From the box came the click-clack-clack of the angry tiger tarantulas. Moro spoke no more nor did any of the others, but all through the long watches of the night and, apparently from different parts of the room, came that threatening click-clack-clack. For the rest—silence. Only once was there a sound excepting that deadly clicking. Thurston, mentally deranged by the racking suspense, gave a sudden shriek and leaped through the closed window. From another part of the room came a horrible gurgle for the room was three stories from the ground and there were granolithic walks below. Then again all was silent save for that deadly click-clack. Slowly, through the hours of the night the years of their lives leaped ahead.

The first light of dawn showed Fenniman on the floor in a dead faint; Bondai, in a pool of cold sweat, lay huddled in a stupor in the corner;

Eisenbaum was the only one who possessed a trace of reason. Moro had disappeared, but the box still lay on the table. Eisenbaum, with grayed hair, slowly began to take notice.

From the corner Bondai spoke in delirium.

"Stubbs asked for ten years, but he got twenty of mine," he muttered.

Eisenbaum, satisfying himself that all was safe, proceeded with faltering footsteps toward the now silent box. He trembled as with palsy. Cautiously he glanced into the box. His face turned a sickly gray.

"God!" he muttered.

From the street came the very faint echo of the cry of the early newsboy. "Wuxtry! Wuxtry! All about de smashing of de Circle."

Unhearing, Eisenbaum stared into the box. He saw an unwound spring and some clockwork. On a revolving pivot was a resonator which threw the noise of the clicker to different parts of the room.

THE SKAGPOLE VENUS, *by Stanley Shaw* will be a big feature of the November issue. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's "Skagpole Venus." But the millionaire in this story did. He liked her and wanted her to hang in his gallery of girls along with Cleopatra and Theda Bara.

PICKLES IN PERSPECTIVE

BY J. BERNARD LYNCH

Clarence thought that all was fair in love and pickle selling. But he learned that when pickles come in the front door, love generally goes out the cellar window.

CLARENCE OVERBRIGHT was stirred considerably. Two lines slipped out of monotype and hung before him a psychological "Safety First."

From a death census of the world it is learned that the average man's life is thirty-three years.

Clarence was the sort who believed in averages. One often heard him declaring, "Given one hundred citizens of these United States and it is perfectly easy to prognosticate the performance of fifty-one per cent." Yes, he talked like that. He also proclaimed himself a fatalist in all life's important matters and many bars.

By both beliefs he was condemned. As a man of forty-two he had no right to be on earth; as a fatalist he could not complain because his two-score years and two had brought him neither fortune nor wife. He threw the paper across the room and strode to the mirror. The reflection conveyed facts not surprising, but never so impressive as at this moment. Shiny tufts pushed into view amidst little islands of hair, as if that abnormally high forehead were trying to force a passage to the rear collar button. The pleasing features, which Clarence had considered a personality asset, were still there, but dismally hedged in by lines at eyes and lips. He frowned and forehead wrinkles added to the wreckage.

"Seven years overdue, and bound to what port?" Clarence wanted to know. "I think you're a darn old derelict," he added, as he snitched a bracer and brought forth a quieting calabash.

The prospects seemed remarkably fine that Clarence Overbright would bequeath posterity only the reputation of being "a decent sort," and what fame naturally follows success as a pickle salesman.

Yet through the gloom shot a ray of hope, as when an all-night drug store brightens an otherwise black street. (This is Clarence's own simile. He was the dismal street, the one light spot was a twinkling idea.)

Fate had put him where he was, now let fate (if fate would) help him out.

Clarence packed his pickle samples and went to the nearest railroad station. In accordance with his unplanned plan of action, he took the first train standing on the first track, without asking the bulletin board where it was going.

Custom led him to the smoker, when he remembered this was a trip

in quest of the romantic. He chose, instead, a battle gray day coach. As his pickle samples tumbled into a plush seat, Clarence sized up the company as commuters doing their daily stunt on a local.

These valuable observations were interrupted by the approach of the conductor. Clarence, with a feeling that Machiavelli had nothing on him, handed out a concave mileage book and waited developments.

"I say," said the conductor, "this is only strong enough for Paradise Centre."

"If I was going any farther," observed Clarence, with the airy persiflage of his profession, "I'd cough up a couple of Bermuda onions."

The conductor punched the book and marched on.

Ten minutes went by and Clarence began to be uneasy. Judging from the fare, Paradise Centre was not far away, and, by the law of averages, if anything were to happen it should start in the first quarter of an hour.

"Fate," he mused, "seems a slow moving cuss. Would it do to give a lift?"

In more than a thousand tales, love stories started in railroad trains. Clarence had read all these stories, your traveling man being a great consumer of magazines simply because no one on a salary can afford to be always playing poker. He knew how they began—in summer the hero opened a window for the heroine, in winter he closed one.

Alas, this was spring!

Clarence shot a glance along the aisle. No signals of distress were in evidence. "Very well," said Clarence to Clarence, "if they won't let me oblige them then they've got to oblige me."

And leaning over the well-dressed shoulder in front of him he said, "I beg your pardon, but would you mind my lowering the shade a trifle? My eyes—"

He was successful in his wholly apocryphal wistfulness, any lie, which is art, being more effective than the truth, because that is merely unimproved nature. But he was not successful with the lady, who was reading a small print copy of "In Tune With the Infinite."

"Why not move?" she wanted to know, and read on.

Clarence leaned back, pathetically shading his eyes with his hand. Since she had proved so heartless, he began to believe there was something the matter with him. Still, it was as well things had turned out this way. He had seen a wedding ring on her finger and doll's legs protruded from her shopping bag. If fate were to give a romantic experience he would prefer it without domestic details.

Observe, now, the ease with which one sets going the unexpected, while that which is anticipated refuses to crank up. Two females upon whom Clarence had no designs whatever took notice of his predicament.

One leaned across the aisle and spoke.

"If you will sit here," she said, softly, "perhaps the light will trouble you less. This is not the sunny side."

So exactly did this fair rescuer accord with all his dreams, that Clarence Overbright hesitated in pure amazement. In the early twenties,

with ringless hands, there she sat, brown eyed, dimpled, radiant with every charm of youth. That she was sweet and kind her request showed; that she was modest was told, as well, by the manner in which said speech was made. Delaying only for a breath of gratitude to fate, Clarence grabbed his young trunk of pickles and would instantly have ensconced himself beside sweet joy, but for a commanding tone from the seat behind, which froze him on his feet.

"If you will sit in here," said the latest speaker, "you may have this shade down as well as the one by the seat you now occupy. That will be much better."

Clarence turned and found himself looking into eyes of baby blue. They were nice enough eyes and should have marked the possessor as of infantile fluidity of character. They did nothing of the sort, for while Clarence stared, one of them winked deliberately, devilishly, and with complete understanding.

"Oh, gosh," murmured Clarence, "she's wise."

There seemed no alternative but to do as she directed, even though brown eyes over the way, after one look of grieved surprise, were persistently glued to the inspiring vista of safety razors and talcum powder.

"Eye strain is always very bad," said the blue-eyed lady, after she had penned Clarence in the corner, and darkened every window in reach. "I hope you have a good oculist."

Clarence was afraid the conversation thus started would develop dangerously, but, somehow, it wasn't five minutes before they got to baked ice cream. The transition seems sudden, and really it was worse than that. Clarence had felt the same but once before—when he struck the mangle in a Human Laundry at Coney. However, as they were talking of such things, he might as well get a word in.

"What you say," he exclaimed, "makes one think of pickles. Doesn't it make one think of pickles?"

"Not a bit," said she, sharp as a sliced dill. "Why should it? It's only maple walnut sundaes they go with, and I like mine with slathers of chocolate."

Clarence, from what he could see in the twilight, believed every word. Hers were both the other F's that go with forty; her face was round and there was more than a suspicion of a double chin. About the sort of a woman, Clarence reflected, that a man of forty-two would be proud of claiming as his wife, if he had had the pleasure of wooing and winning her when she was twenty. They would have approached middle age together in the mutual comfort that ought to flourish when romance dies. He was almost peeved because fate hadn't put them both on this train a couple of decades back. He would have been so well fed and mended all these years, and now looking forward with equanimity to a silver wedding.

But it had not been, and just because he was forty-two he was not going to be cheated out of a real, heart-burning experience. Such, for instance, as promised might he only escape to that seat across the way. Yes, she was still counting the telegraph poles, although not quite dead to the situation, he thought.

The other one—what was she talking about now?

Cucumbers,—of all things,—cucumbers! And after turning down his leading, too.

"I just dote on cucumber sandwiches," she was saying, in the most confidential of tones. "I ought to dote on them, for it cost my husband fifteen dollars for me to learn how to make them."

"In—indeed," said Clarence, all his eyes and half his mind on the other side of the aisle. "Those domestic science classes are expensive, aren't they?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," she responded. "It was a box in a theatre I learned in. 'The Importance of Being Earnest,' was the dinky play, and in the first act came the cucumber sandwiches. You never saw anything so cute. We both wished the play would last a week, and we came home after the first act so I could make some. Oh, dear; how it all comes back! We drank Guinness."

Clarence made no comment. He couldn't, being entirely taken up with mental measurement of a dainty ear. It was unornamented, and he rejoiced. Had the woman by his side been Mrs. Clarence Overbright for twenty-two years, he reflected, she would never have been permitted to stab her ear lobes with their present overgrown sparklers, which were not only in shocking bad taste, but quite out of proportion to C. Overbright's salary and pickle commissions.

"Perhaps," she was saying, smilingly, "you don't care for my subject of conversation. I remember Richard—my husband, Mr. Hunt—often declared women made a mistake in bringing the cook book into society. 'Leave it where it belongs,' he would say, 'in the kitchen, and only fetch us the finished product which it aids—' "

She paused, for Clarence sat up and gave her the benefit of his full attention.

"Madam—madam," he stuttered, "did I understand you correctly? Was the name Hunt—Richard Hunt?"

"It was."

"And am I addressing Mrs. Hunt?"

"You are."

Clarence drew fourteen things from his pocket and began to fumble for a card. When he found one that was not trey of hearts, he pressed it into the hands of his seatmate and she read:

CLARENCE OVERBRIGHT
Representing
HUNT, HEYWARD AND HUNT
Pickles

Mr. Heyward being long departed, and the second Hunt existing for euphony only, Mr. Overbright had been, for the past year, an employe of Richard Hunt's widow. True, she was never seen in the works, being excellently served by the superintendent and managers whom Richard Hunt had trained. But curiosity would sometimes overcome the odor of boiling vinegar, and acid got in its deadly work while the help gassed about their lady boss.

And now fate—what had she done for Clarence Overbright? Or hadn't she done so much?

The lady just glanced at the card, but, to his disappointment, made no remark. Perhaps she really had bad eyesight and couldn't read it in this

darkened car. She dropped it in a gold mesh bag and rose as the train approached a station.

"Goodbye," she said, with vague friendliness. "If you haven't already seen an oculist, do so without delay."

Her generous figure was framed by the doorway. Clarence sighed. Doubtless he ought to have played up better in that talkative half hour. Of course, had he known she was Mrs. Hunt, he would have kept a few glances from straying. It was too late now, and he had better hustle into that opposite seat while his courage was good. But what excuse could be make?

As he turned, in the hope of an encouraging smile, he was in time to see the object of his thoughts streaking it for the other door, and to hear the brakeman bawl, "Paradise Centre! This train express to—"

Clarence never knew where, for he and his pickle samples hit the cinder bed just as the two ladies disappeared round the vine embowered station. He raced across the platform, too, but without reward. A buzz in the distance was probably Mrs. Hunt's limousine. As for she of the brown eyes, the earth appeared to have swallowed her up.

This was a pity, because anybody could tell him where Mrs. Hunt lived, and, as a matter of fact, the first grocer he approached with talk of pickles, volunteered the information that her given name was Hazel, her fortune half a million, and her reputation that of getting what she went after.

Clarence, remembering the scene in which he had been kidnapped from a car window, could well believe that.

"Ah," he mused, in mortifying retrospect, "then she thought I was some conquest. She didn't know I was just one of her hired men."

The brown-eyed girl, whom it now seemed so extremely desirable to meet once more, would be less easy to sleuth. Of course she was the paragon of Paradise Centre, but the boob (also grocer) to whom he applied with this description had said he knew exactly the party, and then produced from the back of his watch a decidedly inferior variety of girl, with a hook nose.

Overbright, musing in his room at Paradise Centre's near-hostelry, could hit on nothing better than a house-to-house canvass with pickle samples. The town seemed small; two days should cover it. And if she of the brown eyes didn't rise to the pickle bait, then it would be only needful to blame fate and haunt the railroad station.

Pleased with his chicanery, Clarence treated himself to a walk and on the second turn to the right (always take the second turn to the right when assisting fate) he saw her. She was in a pretty yard, and had evidently just come forth from a charming cottage. Her hair was flowing free, having been lately set at liberty from the braids and loops and things in which it had been immured. Of course it curled and of course something about tendrils came into the mind of Clarence.

Her object in being out was to observe how the daffies had been advancing during her absence. She had been gone a whole afternoon, so it was unknowing what they might have done.

"Ahem!" said Clarence.

She looked up, prepared to be angry, then recognized him, and let her eyes smile even though she kept her lips demure.

"It's a lovely evening," said Clarence, telling it all at once so she would have no chance to get away, "or it will be when the sun's down. Isn't Paradise Centre a handsome place? I don't know when I've seen one I like better and I haven't been here long enough to see much of it, either. What lovely flowers! All your own growing, I suppose? By the way, does your mother ever use pickles?"

Even to a man with a heart pounding like a low-geared motor in a hill climb, Clarence's remarks seemed to lack continuity, but, oddly enough, the girl did not mind.

"I declare," she said, "you talk like a pickle salesman."

Clarence's jaw fell. "It's what I am," he muttered, and tendered his card for the second time in the hour. Just like the other lady, she gave it but a scanty glance, at the same time retaining it for possible future reference.

"Oh, you're Hunt's pickles," she remarked. "So's papa. Perhaps you know papa,—Charles Hart? I'm Hazel Hart."

Clarence *did* know Charles Hart, but that didn't astonish him so much as the peculiar coincidence of finding that both heroines of the rail bore the name of Hazel—he almost said the witching name of Hazel.

He improved on that when he got better acquainted with Miss Hart; that is, in about twenty minutes. He then called it bewitching. By that time, he had gotten on the other side of the gate, had forced the dog to be reconciled to his presence, learned that "papa" was in Maine on a business trip, and told Miss Hazel's mother that zinnias should never be planted upside down. It only remained to ask Mrs. Hart for permission to invite her daughter to show him the natural beauties of Paradise Centre, which was done, three P. M. of the following day being named. He then took his leave, being still in pleased doubt concerning a matter which had occupied a great deal of his time during the call—how best to sort the golden threads from the brown strands of that wonderful hair.

At the hotel, he went through the formality of informing Hunt, Heyward & Hunt of the small orders he had wormed—with information—from the local grocers. The house-to-house canvass being now off, it remained only to make provision for an absence of length. He wrote:

> During the past three hours I have succumbed to disease. A specialist would consider it serious, and, I believe, myself, its cure is only to be found in this abode of quiet diversion. Until further notice, I may be addressed in care of this hotel.

And signed himself, "Hopefully—Overbright."

The letter mailed, Clarence enjoyed an hour of reflection in the society of his calabash. Out of blue clouds, he evoked the shadowy form of Hazel Hart and found that his affection was not in the least altered by the knowledge that Charles Hart pulled down a salary several sizes smaller than the Overbright one, whereby the cottage must be mortgaged and Hazel's marriage portion principally good will. It

was only the peacock vanity of the male animal that brought eyes of baby blue to vie with those of brown. And it was not of the pink widow that he thought when he slipped between the covers.

Clarence did not make the mistake of rising with the sentiment-destroying gray dawn. He was still slumbering peacefully when the noon sun touched the marks of middle age about his eyes and tipped him the glad tidings that he had saved the price of a breakfast.

During a leisurely dinner he enjoyed the economical pleasure of erecting air castles; later, came the nerve destroying task of scheming how to get foundations under them.

Perked and primed, he descended on the Hart household at precisely three o'clock. Ten minutes later, he was being led out of the gate by Hazel, the perfect guide. With her hand lying gently on his arm, Clarence felt the oppressive burden of his forty-two years zep to desuetude. He vibrated with the spirit of Monte Cristo, and felt sympathy for those millions of unfortunates who knew not Hazel Hart. Through lane and path they strolled, unconcerned with time or destination. Hazel occasionally endeavored to qualify as guide, and stopped at such periods to point out a soldier's monument or a town pump. Clarence was conscious only that she was speaking and that her voice was musical. Besides, it appeared that everything of note was a by-product of Hunt generosity. At length Hazel turned from the R. Hunt Memorial Library, at which he looked only as it was reflected in her eyes, and murmured, "Perhaps you are bored with buildings. Would you care to visit the place that I like best—that I think the most beautiful in town?"

"I should like it of all things," said Clarence. "Lead me to it."

They fell into a more rapid stride and, in the silence peculiar to those freighted with tender feeling, penetrated the woods about which they had hitherto skirmished. Intoxicated by the tonic odor of pine, and feeling the billowy carpet of fallen leaves under his feet, Clarence held out his hand; the girl took it without objection, and, like two children, they raced under the trees. Clarence was the one to first slacken. As he did so, he noticed, with appreciation, that she was a literal wood girl; her cheeks had darkened to carmine and her eyes sparkled with the kiss of the winds. He mused on the possible effect of other kisses, as she said, glowing with local pride, "This is Paradise Haven. And yonder—" pointing a slim finger— "is Lover's Rest."

"Glorious!" cried Clarence. "Fit abiding place for those whose god is love. Come, Hazel, let us rest there. The sun is sinking—it's the witching hour."

On a point of rock near the water, they sat; Clarence, at least, at peace with all the world. How beautiful was the mellow radiance of the declining light, how soothing the song of the river in its pebbly bed! The boyish soul of the man, long held in bondage, struggled and found an outlet.

"Hazel," he said, suddenly, "forgive the abruptness of the question, how old are you?"

"Nineteen," she answered softly.

He thought deeply; he subtracted; he added; nineteen and forty-two being the sums juggled. What was a mere twenty-three years between sweethearts? Besides, he remembered that newspaper item, and it gave added impetus to a faculty for making quick decisions.

"Darling," he whispered, passionately, kneeling beside her on the rock, "I love you. I want you for my wife."

She looked up, startled; then hung her head. He waited while the river yielded up a hopeful strain and the sunshine painted a golden halo about her head. He felt somewhat of cheer in the fact that she hadn't rejected him instantly.

"We have met but twice," she faltered. "I saw you yesterday for the first time."

"What does that matter?" he pleaded, "if we love each other!"

The troubled look was swept from her face by this cogent reasoning and, displaying such tokens of surrender as a submissive smile and a happy sigh, she moved toward his outstretched arms. Her ruddy lips were upturned and then—

Together they watched nature transform the sunset into the gloaming.

In the night and morning that followed, no thoughts of pickles intruded upon the romantic dreams of Clarence, save as they might be the means of turning blissful visions to solid reality. In the early afternoon, as he sat on the hotel veranda, he was but whiling away the time until the trysting hour of three. Thus enthralled, he failed to notice a large bright noise which broke the village peace and was making straight for the hotel. Of course, it was the imported machine of the other Hazel, and in it was ensconced, all purple and shiny like the car, and prinked out with pelts of panthers, wild cats and other beasts difficult to catch and of great value.

"Oh, Mr. Overbright," she cried, bringing herself deftly to a stop by the steps, "I've just come from the office, where I learned you were here for your health. You should have let me know before; perhaps I could have done something to make your stay less disagreeable. A hotel is such a dismal place for an invalid."

Clarence, conscious of having cured his incipient disease at a woodsy place known locally as Lover's Rest, looked foolish and tried to say something wise. Mrs. Hunt, true to the furs she was wearing, purred on. "Isn't it a glorious day? Heavenly, I call it, even though when motoring one does need heavy wraps. Spring is in the air, the spring that sweeps age before it. I thought—"

She paused. A broad invitation to a comparative stranger of the male sex might be within the privileges of a widow, but she rather wished this one would show a more coming-on disposition.

"I thought—" she reiterated.

"Just so," assisted Clarence. "It's real thoughtful of you."

As a matter of fact, he was by no means averse to motoring for an hour with Mrs. Hunt, if only he could feel sure of keeping the other Hazel tryst.

The widow's pink turned to deep

carnation. Clarence ceased concentrating on the mechanically perfect chug-chug of the engine, and hazarded an intensive survey of the stylish little woman in the splendid car. Perhaps the lure of luxury got him—perhaps the undefinable attraction which an experienced widow holds for a curious bachelor.

"Won't you come up and sit down?" he ventured.

"No, indeed. I'm bound to have a whirl this afternoon."

"You are wise," he responded, assuming an eagerness he at once began to feel; "I envy you."

"Pshaw!" she responded. "Don't give way to such unholy thoughts, but get your overcoat and come along. I'm sure it will do you good."

Pausing only to murmur something about a business engagement at three— he must be back at three for an important matter which he left her to believe was directly connected with pickles—Clarence relaxed on the leather cushions.

The vanity which he had probably inherited from his stone age ancestors, and which wanted only such food as this to grow upon, soon caused Clarence to sit up manfully, to take note of the kowtowing of every native, and to exhibit the best of his conversational gifts.

So the sordid smudge grew to a blaze, in which disappeared the fragrant thought of Hazel Hart waiting among the daffy-down-dillies.

"It is almost three," said the widow, tugging at a wrist watch, "and I suppose you have to keep your engagement. Too bad, for I should so like to take you round the River Road and up to the house for tea."

"Oh, well," lied Clarence, "it wasn't so awfully important. Just something about—sweet pickles."

"Shucks," said the female pickle magnate, "they'll keep!"

And the turn was made to the Boulevard.

To Clarence, the arrival later, at the big house, was only something he seemed to have read about. That strange object, a servant in livery, helped him to alight; a maid in cap and apron ushered them in, and a solicitous butler gathered his hat and coat. He was left to get acquainted with the great white-and-gold drawing-room while Mrs. Hunt tore upstairs to rid herself of veils and goggles. An ocean of luxury was sweeping him off his feet; he closed his eyes and breathed in the rose-scented air of tropic isles where travelling salesmen were unknown and pickles unnecessary.

Then he shook himself free of the poison; remembered his wood nymph with passionate regret, and was just rushing for hat and coat when—Mrs. Hunt returned! Magnificent was she, indeed, in some subtle arrangement of silk and lace.

"Tea will come soon," she said, pushing toward him a lacquered box of Turkish cigarettes. Then, seeing him hesitate, she sat up and grinned.

"There—I fancy you don't care for these at all. I presume you prefer strong black cigars, or—a pipe? Ah, I've guessed correctly. You do prefer a pipe."

"I do," he said, succinctly, "but one would hardly fit in here."

"There is no room in my house," she

declared, "whence tobacco is banished, but if you feel that way, we'll go up to the den. There's a collection of meerschaums and calabashes that you may like to examine."

The den was akin to every den, only Clarence was not much used to them. The light come softly from a central dome, racks were laden with the famous pipes which Richard Hunt had "collected" with the skill of a man to whom money is no object. In the cozy corner, Mrs. Hunt deftly arranged the silken cushions with her own pretty hand before Clarence was allowed to sink thereon.

Tea came on a silver tray, but even while Mrs. Hunt manipulated the tea ball she merrily caught Clarence's eye and said, "I shouldn't wonder if the house could furnish something that would please you much better. How is it, Mr. Overbright?"

"You have guessed right," he said and mentally congratulated her as a mighty understanding woman.

It was the matter of a moment to unlock a cellaret and ring for ice. At the same time, word was sent to the chef to knock up a couple of club sandwiches—not forgetting the sliced cucumber. Clarence felt he had very little left to live for, as he watched her measure the gin and vermouth, add the syrup, strain the orange juice, give just the required amount of energy to the shaker, and pour out the result with assurred pride.

"This," said she, brightly, "should be to your taste. My—Richard used to say it was the kind that Ingersoll advertised."

"And Robert was some advertising expert," commented Clarence.

A spirit of enterprise fired Clarence Overbright as he nibbled after sipping. When the gods were good was it not wise to gather in their offerings?

"Somehow," said he to Mrs. Hunt, "it isn't quite friendly here with so much neutral territory between us."

The long lashes fell coyly. Clarence moved a cushion or so, and the widow tentatively took a seat in her own cozy corner. In the subdued light, and to his fancy, she seemed to beckon in dazzling appeal. He took her hand and opened his mouth to speak, when there came the restraining vision of the wood girl. But he would none of it, and pushed it away by thinking, "It's too bad for her to be deceived—so young and so unworldly as she is—but this, ah, it's fate! And one can't help slipping when fate gives a shove."

As the vision departed, Clarence splintered all romantic barriers and plunged into the depths of inconstancy.

With the resources of mutual experience, progress was rapid until the widow said "Yes," and Clarence clasped her generous waist line. The evening was wonderful, from the tête-a-tête dinner at a table gay with tulips, to the after hour in the balcony. Just before they said goodnight—she was sending him home in the limousine—Hazel Hunt slipped a velvet case into her lover's coat pocket.

"Nothing of any consequence," she whispered; "just that big bowled calabash you admired. It was never smoked. I want you to throw away all the others and use only that, now."

"*That* a trifle," said Clarence, startled. "It's mounted with hall-

marked silver. It must have cost at least two hundred—"

"What's that, you silly boy? Isn't all I have to be yours—sometime!"

Only on arriving within the bleak confines of his room, did Clarence come to earth.

"Ye gods and little fishes," he ejaculated, "I've proposed to the widow and she's accepted me. Furthermore, she says all she has is mine. As she in Hunt, Heyward & Hunt, pickles, I may ultimately be in my own employ, with a salary limited only by what the traffic will stand. Oh, destiny, destiny, why must you be so generous? Two queens in my hand, and it's one for the discard if I sit in the game."

Clarence pulled at the intervals of tufted hair on his head and bowed thoughtfully over the desk, which was appropriately of fumed oak.

"Oh, cottage and dream-girl smiling me welcome therefrom," he almost sobbed. "Why have I allowed anything to interfere for a moment with the chances of your realization? I have waited long for you; now you may be mine, and bring that supreme bliss wherein is the joy of being loved. And I have never been young in heart."

Clear as a well-done picture on a movie screen, he glimpsed the face of Hazel Hart. Then, as a "cut in" he saw the expensive calabash that concretely stood for the substantial offerings of Hazel Hunt. His eyes grew calm and his lips moved. "Fate," said he, addressing nobody in particular, "you have gotten me into this predicament. Now it's for you to help me out."

Securing pen and paper he wrote:

Dearest Hazel:

I am sorry— I am much more than sorry—to write this letter, but circumstances which I cannot explain leave me no alternative. Our engagement must be broken for our marriage is impossible. Try to forget that I ever asked for your hand, that you cared, that I cared. Forget, if you can, everything except that the writing of this leaves me forever

Your wretched
Clarence

Two envelopes were addressed, one to the widow, one to the wood girl. He placed them tenderly on either side of the missive. He would shuffle the envelopes behind his back, the one coming into his right hand after he had counted fifty should receive the letter.

Clarence began to shuffle and to count. At fifty he drew forward his right hand. The envelope read, "Hazel Hart."

He heaved a sigh, mayhap of regret, or of resignation.

"Dear girl," he whispered, "you take my youth with you."

And sealing the message with a kiss, he went out to the letter chute.

But—wait!

We are often told the best of a feminine letter is in the postscript, which reminds us that the vital point of most stories is in the anti-climax. This is one of 'em.

While he was a believer in fate, one should not forget that Clarence knew something of the law of averages. To prevent the latter from having undue influence on the former, faithful Hazel Hart's envelope was nicked for recognition.

He cheated!

Clarence Overbright was tired of selling pickles.

THE WINGED SHRAPNEL

BY FRED O. COPELAND

The fascination of the chase is in this story, which has to do with the theft of an invention dedicated to modern warfare.

"NOT a clue," came the old gentleman's voice a second time, weighted with sadness and disappointment.

"Not yet, but cheer up; some of the boys will get him; he's loaded down with a heavy, cumbersome thing; he can't get out of the country with it."

The second speaker, after this assurance, looked quickly about him for he seemed to realize that he had been lost in thought and had unwittingly dropped his guard thereby.

"Ah, but it's been a full week now and North America is large," remonstrated the old man with a slow shake of the head.

Like the spasmodic murmur of a telegraph instrument this and other snatches of conversation had been stealing to me through the leaves of a huge palm from the other side of which, at a table, sat a fine looking old gentleman and opposite him a faultlessly attired middle-aged man with restless dark eyes; the one, representative of a fine type of the careful artist, the other, a prosperous professional man. The main restaurant of Kansas City's largest hotel was almost empty for the hour was early, yet these two and myself had taken lunch and were on the point of leaving. Unwilling listener at first, I had become so excited with my thoughts that several times I had been on the point of rushing to the other table, but had thrown off the desire by the sheer oddity of the move, and now, having deserted the inclination, I arose and made for the door which would lead me by the occupied table. Opposite them, my desire to speak forced me to pause; on the spur of the moment I stepped to the table and addressed the two men.

"Gentlemen, I hope you will pardon me on two counts; first for intruding and secondly for being an eavesdropper."

This last word sent the older man's fingers nervously toying with the tablecloth, while his companion visibly stiffened, and, holding me with his dark eyes, he shot out a crisp inquiry: "Sir, you have the advantage of us?"

Handing each my card, I took the offered chair between them and resumed: "Gentlemen, I frankly believe I have fallen heir to a queer coincidence which will greatly interest you. First, however, a hasty word of introduction is due you. From my card you no doubt have observed I am an eastern man, but Kansas City is my old home. For several years I have divided my three weeks' vacation be-

tween Lake Champlain and this city. Three days ago, late in the evening, I sat on the porch of a shooting lodge, looking out on the lake where the international line crosses Mississquoi bay, when one of the guides who distributes the shooters to the duck blinds came up to our group on the porch and left word that the stranger who had arrived by the morning train would not occupy his room, that he had suddenly changed his mind upon reaching the blind and had asked to be landed on Province Point, which is across the line. An observation by the guide, and one that we at the lodge paid no attention to at the time, was his remarking on the queer look of a thermos bottle which the stranger rapped in his coat and placed in his bag just before they reached the shore. The guide's curiosity was aroused by the fact that it had legs attached to its bottom so that it could be stood up in a pitching boat. Gentlemen, in view of your recent conversation, what is passing in my mind must be clear to you."

The old gentleman, who had seemed to hold his breath during my short speech, leaned toward me and was about to speak when his companion stopped him with a gesture of his hand and, turning to me, said: "Mr. Culver, taking you at your word or rather your card, I see you are a banker and, on account of the peculiar circumstances, I am sure you will pardon me in asking an identification the same as you would ask of a stranger presenting a cheque at your bank. You say Kansas City is your old home?"

"You are quite right," I assured him. "I am sure I can put all three of us at ease by suggesting that you call up an old friend of my family,—a Mr. Whitney in the Missouri Building; he is widely known in the city."

"That will be a gilt-edged identification indeed," agreed the older man, regarding me with new interest.

The younger of the two men immediately excused himself in order to carry out my suggestion and advised he would join us in a few moments at the desk. In the meantime, the old gentleman and myself made our way slowly to the office and were indulging in a common topic—the flood stage of the Missouri and Kaw rivers—when the younger man joined us and immediately assured me he was satisfied regarding my identity, adding that Mr. Whitney and he were also well acquainted. "Mr. Culver," he went on with a laugh, "I am a firm believer in reciprocity and it gives me pleasure to make you acquainted with Colonel Shippey of Kansas City and as for myself, my card will have to serve for an introduction for the time being. You say your time is quite your own; would it be asking too much to suggest that we step down to my office in the Midcontinental Building where we may be insured of privacy? Our little talk at the table interested me greatly."

"It will be a pleasure to be of any assistance," I replied, "if you care to place your time against mine. I sincerely trust I am not rising false hopes."

"Ah; we are willing to be the judges of that," he said, with a smile, as we started for the outer door.

I took another look at his card as we passed through the door: S. S. Clark, Clark & Baldwin, Attorneys at

Law, I read to myself. Huh, it will make an interesting hour, I mused.

At the entrance to the Midcontinental Building we were met by a representative of one of the large detective agencies which spread their network over the large cities of our land. Certainly, Mr. Clark had made good use of his time at the telephone. He excused himself gracefully the minute we were in his office and led the late arrival into an inner room. Hardly, however, had Colonel Shippey, who seemed to be finding himself, finished a short account of a period in his earlier years which might be told in short by using his oft repeated words: "Sir, I stood on the shore near Los Angeles and saw the Pacific take away all I had built in five years," when the door of the inner room opened and Clark nodded for us to join them.

"Mr. Culver," he began, with intense directness, once we were seated, "my friend, Colonel Shippey, has invented a projectile for cutting barb wire entanglements. On the day we were advised of the granting of the patent, the projectile was stolen from Colonel Shippey's home. Not a single clue has come to light till we fell in with you today. It is almost a waste of words to call to your attention the part such a shell would play in modern warfare and to suggest that not only have we, through the best detective agencies, put forth our best efforts to gain possession of the shell and the thief but, since its being and whereabouts must have been learned at Washington, secret agents of foreign nations may be as hotly in pursuit as ourselves. Acting on the advice of our friend from the agency, I am going to urge you to help us find the stanger with the thermos bottle, and, I may say, we are not only willing, but anxious, to reimburse you for the inconvenience."

"One moment before you answer, Mr. Culver," broke in the detective. "Would you again know this stranger of whom you speak?"

"Unless he had greatly changed himself, I am sure I would," I said.

"You'll go then?" anxiously asked the colonel, his eyes searching mine.

"I'll do the best I can," I replied, surprised at my own words.

"Good! we'll call it settled," approved the detective, extending his hand. "We'll see that no harm comes to you, sir. Can you leave for the East on the Santa Fé Eight this evening?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Very well; I'll meet you at quarter before eight on the curb squarely in front of the station entrance. Goodday, gentlemen."

Colonel Shippey was all smiles as he turned and motioned me to a seat beside him. "You should know of this invention of mine; a man likes to know what kind of game he is chasing eh? Consider a projectile about two feet long and three inches in diameter, of a weight that would tax the strength of your arms as you held it loosely in front of you. Along its length three arms, hinged near the bottom and arranged equal distances apart, fit each into a mortise cut along the side of the projectile. Fancy the tearing effect produced when these wire cutting arms are spread nearly four feet, like the ribs of an umbrella, by the explosion of a small charge ignited by

a time fuse in a chamber of the base. It is shell of this size that has made the seventy-five millimetre French gun so dreaded. Sir, they would clean up a barb wire entanglement as a garden rake tears cobwebs."

"So they would," I agreed. "I shall have to use the time-worn expression: 'It's a wonder no one has thought of it before!' And now, gentlemen, I am sure you will excuse me. I can assure you the spirit of the chase has hold of me and we'll hope for success."

"One moment, Mr. Culver," cried Clark, as he turned from his desk. "Here is something to smooth the road," he said, as he handed me five crisp government notes well above the usual figure. "We'll keep in touch with you," he added, as I waved good-bye from the outer door.

Little enough I'll see of the old town, I mumbled to myself that evening as I awaited the arrival of the man from the agency. But this may run into the experience of my life, at least there is something fascinating—

"Good evening, Mr. Culver; you're a bit early; in fact, we both are," sounded the voice of my acquaintance of the early afternoon at my elbow. "Here, sir," he went on, handing me an envelope, "is a schedule of the connecting trains to Montreal, the city we wish you to visit in the hope of locating your duck shooting friend. One of our men will meet your train in Montreal, but I hope by that time we may save you further inconvenience. However, if nothing has turned up by the time of your arrival, a plan of further procedure will have been worked out at the Montreal office. There is nothing more I can tell you now except that it will be an excellent plan to search your memory for every detail regarding the appearance of the stranger at the shooting lodge. It will, of course, be asked you by the office in Montreal."

This last was spoken as I presented my ticket at the door to the train sheds and with a "Good-bye," he left me;—a pea-green amateur detective hunting for one man out of the one hundred twenty millions of souls of my native country and England's dominion over the seas.

At eight o'clock the next morning, I ate breakfast at Chicago in the same room of the Blackstone, where, two days before, on the run West, I had watched the peculiar light-green waters of Lake Michigan sparkle beyond the waving daisies in the window boxes almost in reach from my table at the window. At eight o'clock the following morning, I was gliding along the shore of Lake Champlain. The familiar waters served to intensify my growing feeling of the utter foolishness of the whole thing. Why hadn't I kept my mouth closed and this evening enjoyed the sunset from the Bluff at Kansas City overlooking the old Missouri and again seen the acres of tracks far below twinkle with colored lights, seen the Twelfth Street Viaduct blossom into beauty when the electric current warmed its clusters of frosted globes. What a monumental wild-goose chase!

With the arrival of my train in the Windsor Street station at Montreal, I was met by, as it seemed to me, a Brigadier General of the Union Army. At any rate, his portly figure, white

mustache and goatee, would have carried him far in a contest of candidates. The gentleman stepped forward, called me by name and let me out to a waiting motor-car, saying: "With your permission, sir, we will go to the Place Viger station; I will explain on the way." I liked the general at first sight. As we glided between the banks on St. James Street and the cathedral on Notre Dame, the general told me of their plans. It was arranged for me to go at once to Quebec for our "Clue"—as I had come to call the stranger of the shooting lodge—might attempt to leave Canada by one of the small Quebec lines of steamers reaching South American waters. I was simply to register at the Chateau at Quebec; renew acquaintances if I stumbled directly onto the Clue on the Terrace, a place that would attract him sooner or later; and to immediately wire the Montreal office.

Morning found me on Dufferin Terrace in the quaint old walled city; —a bit of mediæval Europe perched upon a rock. What a relief it was after the long ride to feel again the west breeze on my cheek! What a sight it was from this splendid esplanade to see it fret the surface of the green St. Lawrence into waves that danced in the morning sun! By noon, however, I was rather tired of pacing the Terrace and the corridors of the Chateau and was glad of the relief afforded by a seat at a table in the open air restaurant of the Chateau, offering a clear view of the Terrace.

"Will you try some of the brook trout, sir?" inquired my waiter with a gracious bow; "they are fresh from the Laurentians and are very fine.

"So I will," I said, smiling as I remembered my only asset as a detective, my brainfood diet: whitefish at Chicago, frogs-legs at Kansas City and now trout at Quebec. But perhaps frogs-legs are only a semi-brain after all, I argued, hesitating, pencil on order card, to take that usual glance of indecision into space for the dessert. People crossed my vision disturbing my mental hunt; a man with golf clubs stepped briskly into my narrow field. I jumped; winked my eyes into normal sight. "The Clue," flashed the message to my brain with a suddenness that frightened me motionless.

"You are ill, sir?" I faintly heard the words of the waiter.

"No, no!" I gasped, pushing the pencil and card into his hand, "I'll be back later."

"I must wire Montreal; the man can't get off the Terrace in that direction. Yes, he can;—the board walk around the base of the Citadel. He is making for the golf links on the Plains of Abraham," flashed over me. "I'll not lose you now; the message can wait," I mentally resolved and started after him. The British flag, snapping high up on the Citadel, caught my eye; the very spot from which to watch him clear to the links. I waited to see him mount the first short flight of steps for the long, steep pull around the cliff. In ten minutes a motorcar had dropped me at the Citadel gate. "I'm after the view," I announced to the artilleryman who stepped toward me. Together we made our way across the Parade toward the huge disappearing guns which poke their black snouts out over the river from

Cape Diamond's forty acres of solid rock.

Arrived at the eastern wall, my guide with the rakish cap, pointed with his swagger stick to the steps leading up to the flagstaff. Up beside the staff I was glad to cling to it for support for the wind tugged at me smartly. I looked down three hundred feet below, my eyes following the wooden walk as it led up by flights from the Terrace toward the wall of the fortress. Ah! someone else was enjoying the view. I could easily see the golf bag sway to and fro as he stood, leaning his elbow on the railing, and seemingly played with the clubs hanging in midair by the strap clutched in his hand. "If that strap breaks you will be in for a new outfit," I chuckled. Of a sudden, he started along. The clubs dropped like a shot. An instant he stopped on a new flight of steps to watch them bound down the face of the cliff. Had he deliberately let go of them? On, on, they went; I could see them long after they must have left his sight. "He's signaling or sending a message to someone below in a boat," I said to myself and half turned to examine the serious grey eyes of the artilleryman below as if for an expected answer. "This is too much for me; I'd better get the general from Montreal," I decided as I turned again toward the river and watched the afternoon sun light up a church spire far across at Levis, making it flash back a challenge to the British flag above me.

"Back to the Chateau," I sang out to the pilot of my motor-driven equipage at the Citadel gate. When we arrived after a quick run down the Grand Allee, I lost no time in telephoning the general and had the satisfaction of hearing his voice promise to be with me late that night. In the meantime, I had made up my mind to see where the golf bag had landed, not that I ever expected to see it or its hidden message, but I might get a look at the second party if there was one. It didn't seem possible the bag was lost by accident; the Clue's act was too deliberate, and why hadn't he tried to recover it himself?

It took but a moment to hire a caleche and ere long we were jerking down Mountain Hill. A turn to the right and we were pounding the board pavement of Surs le Cap's miniature canyon in Lower Town, which leads up river to a tongue of land that almost pinches out against the Citadel cliff. My eyes instantly sought the face of the cliff. Back of me a bit of color fluttered; it was the flag on the Citadel. Why! we've gone by the place where the bag must have landed. I looked across the St. Lawrence for my bearings. Ha! there was the church spire at Levis, farther back too. I reached over, punched the driver and motioned for him to turn back. In a few moments we were jogging back along the ancient houses of Surs le Cap.

"Wait!" I yelled to the driver. "Can I get up there to take a picture?" I inquired, pointing first to my pocket kodak and then to the cliff.

He was all smiles, bowed as though in a quadrille, waved his arms on high and ran off several yards of soft, musical French, till we had around us a crowd of open-eyed street urchins, timid as squirrels. The driver

teased one to him, and after much shrugging of the shoulders the little fellow's curiosity over a silver coin overcame his shyness and I had procured a guide who knew every cranny of the great cliff rising back of the scarcely less ancient wall of little houses.

Up a little alley, we made our way and then came the climb on the cliff, which was not so bad after all. Twenty feet up and a narrow terrace lay before us, hidden alike from above and below. I waited to catch my breath and killed time by grinning at my tiny guide, who squirmed thereat and looked at me when I didn't at him.

"*Attendez,*" I half ventured, half commanded.

His big brown eyes looked askance at my Yankee French, but his shoulders stood by him nobly and he understood; he would wait.

It was fairly easy footing along the terrace. Here and there a stunted evergreen relieved the barrenness. The Citadel was obscured, but across the river the church at Levis sent up its guiding hand and I squeezed around a narrow bend with assurance. The terrace widened even more and—*voila!* there before my eyes lay the battered golf bag, both wooden clubs broken, the heads hanging by the winding only. One of the irons lay near, also broken. I reached down a trembling hand and picked it up. I dropped it with a start;—not broken, but sawed off clean. Was I too late after all? If the general were only here! I knelt down by the battered bag and pulled out a club; it was sawed off too. I pulled them all out; the lower part of the bag retained its shape. Was I seeing things? Something inside felt hard and slippery. With difficulty I worked it out for it was like lead. The winged shrapnel lay before me. Shaking all over, I looked up, down, and made a hasty canvass of the three hundred sixty degrees; I was all alone. I tumbled the bag and clubs behind a little avalanche of loose rock and, after a second's hesitation, pulled off my coat and wrapped it about the shell.

It pulled at my arm as though it were alive, when I used the other arm to wipe the moisture from my brow, hoping thereby to show the caleche driver, who, all smiles, awaited my order from his seat, why I had shed my coat.

"*Au Chateau, mon ami,*" I tried to say in a calm voice, as I slumped down in the rear seat.

I saw red all the way to the Chateau; to the elevator; to my room. What did I care if the uniformed porter hid a smile behind his hand; if the button-festooned elevator boy grinned openly! I sat in my room, humped up on my bag, which held something heavy and shiny, and all was well with the world.

Summers and winters came and went and ever the robin sang, but at last, near the noon of night, the general came. We had dinner, or was it breakfast, in the room. The strains of the violins sounded very sweet to me as they floated up from the ballroom. That talk we had! Surely it will ever stay green beside the road to yesterday.

"Yes," said the general, after a somewhat lengthy trip to his room, as he bent over our two bags, the sin-

ister polish of the winged shrapnel gleaming in his hands, "the Clue miscalculated the distance around the cliff or this would be fathoms deep in the St. Lawrence. I can assure you it is in good hands and that the Clue will have to postpone his further wanderings. And now, sir, I will say, 'Good night' and 'good-bye,' for we must not be seen together in the morning." The general was gone.

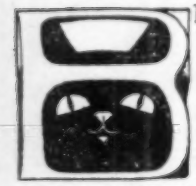
I knelt down to close my now empty bag; something white looked up at me —an envelope. I tore it open. In my hand was a cheque filled for one thousand and attached thereto, a card:—"With the compliments of the Bureau."

Another November feature: THE GENIUSES OF THE SUN, *by Oscar Lewis.* It is the story of a newspaper reporter who went back to the little country paper where he had worked and dreamed as a youth and of the girl whom he had expected to find there. The romance of rural journalism permeates this story.

BABYLON IN POSTER EFFECT

BY HAROLD DE POLO

A man, with neither shock absorbers nor blue glasses, looks upon Babylon for the first time. The scene is faked, but it surpasses patent medicine as a cure.



LANCHE deftly slipped the last hairpin into place, smoothed down her waist and skirt, and turned on Mollie with serious, stern eyes that none the less held in them an expression of deep affection she had tried hard to hide.

"Mollie Varron, answer me, now, this time. Are you goin' to cut out this darn foolery an' be decent an' sensible about the thing?"

Mollie, with her laughing eyes that always fostered mischief, shook her thick gold hair and gazed at her friend with offended mock dignity.

"Why, Blanche! Don't you think I'm actin' *very* sensibly, as you call it? Ain't I goin' the straight an' narrow?"

The other set her arms akimbo; she spoke brusquely: "No, Mollie; you ain't! Here we two come to the country for a rest, sick an' tired to death of posin' an' posin' an' posin'—come for a rest, remember, an' no more. An' here you, right from the start, takes up with a nice, clean, fresh young country lad. I know men, Mollie, I do—an' so do you. An' I know that this boy is takin' it seriously; that he's mighty struck with you. It ain't fair; it ain't right. Here you're givin' him hope an' playin' with the poor kid. I—I don't like to see it, an' it don't seem like you; it don't seem like you to fool with a good, honest kid that don't know the game the way—oh, well, the way, maybe, we do!"

Mollie laughed. Mollie usually laughed, in fact, about everything. The models back in New York, as well as the artists she worked for, said that they never could quite tell just what she meant and how serious she was about a thing; especially as she had a way of making you look at her big blue eyes, always with the devil of mischief lurking in their depths, and of seeing nothing else for the moment.

"Not jealous, Blanche?" she rippled, her eyes twinkling.

Blanche, firm-jawed, open-eyed, straight talking, frowned so that her face looked homelier than ever—for she was not beautiful, but she *did* have a back and arm that were greatly in demand.

"Quit it, Mollie, an' be serious. What I'm sayin' is that you're handin' this Avery—Avery Memphis, ain't it?—a raw deal! He's a fine kid an' I don't like to see him played with; I like clean work, an' you do, too, usually! Can't you see it, Mollie; can't you see it? You make the kid think

you like him; you get him going; you leave here in another week—an' you leave behind you a kid that's dissatisfied with his lot an' no good for a long time an' spoiled in his ideas of women!"

"Maybe I happen to like him," flashed Mollie, but with a twinkle that belied her words.

Blanche shook her head. "Don't think so, Mollie, the way you've acted an' talked—to me. But be straight, girl, an' leave the kid alone. I—I couldn't help it, honest, but I *did* hear him ask you to marry him an' you tell him to wait until tomorrow for his answer—meanin' today, this afternoon!"

Mollie answered between teeth that were holding too many hairpins. "Mmmm! So he did, Blanche. An' what's the harm? But say, give me your dope? What's botherin' *you?*"

Blanche jammed on her straw hat. "I'll tell you what's botherin' me—I'll tell you! *I* come from the country; *I* come from a farm; an *I* know what these boys an' girls think of city people. They're blinded by the clothes an' talk an' the whole difference—an' they fall easy. *I* know; I ought to know. I had a—a kid brother. I liked him; liked him awfully. *He* got mixed up with a city girl—some fool stenographer spendin' her vacation up in our two-for-a-cent village, just about like this place—an' the kid took her seriously an' she threw him over. Bob never did amount to much later; the booze got him an'— But never mind that, now. All I'm sayin' is to leave the kid alone—tell him the truth this afternoon—that's all. Lord, if you want excitement, take up that fat drummer that's been pesterin' you to go on a party with him—but play the kid square! So long, Mollie, goin' for a long walk; back to supper!" And big-hearted, frank-spoken Blanche stalked abruptly from the room!

Mollie Varron sat rigidly before the mirror, gazing searchingly at her own features. It was an attractive, pretty face, surrounded by its curly, thick gold hair; with its merry, dancing eyes, always with that glint of devil-may-care mockery; its whole air of laughing, reckless love of fun. Still, when one searched closer, there was something hard in her eyes and the whole face—something that seemed as if it had started out soft and tender and grown hard through no fault of its own. She smiled at herself; a smile that was half cynical, half whimsical. It was typical of Mollie—for people never could "quite make her out."

Finishing her dressing, she rose and went to the window of their big, cherry, sun-bathed room in the old hotel, overlooking the crooked main street of the sleepy Vermont village. It was peaceful out there; with the small white church, specklessly clean; the ramshackle store and post-office combined; the tiny patch of green grass, surrounded by granite pillars and iron chains, that boasted the name of "Park;" the few quaint, ivy-covered houses,—it all reminded her so of—

But a knock came at the door.

"Hello," she called out, in her clear, laughing tones, "come right ahead in!"

Slowly the door opened. A tall, lank, stoop-shouldered man entered,

his frayed straw hat clenched in his right hand. His face was seamed with innumerable wrinkles—but his rugged, weather-beaten face denoted strength. He looked at her from clear, sharp grey eyes that seemed to shrewdly search into her very soul. He spoke haltingly, as if the words were of some vital importance.

"Excuse me. You be—be Miss Varron—Miss Mollie Varron?"

"Yes," she smiled; then added, gravely, but with a lurking twinkle in her eyes, "I be!"

He nodded his head thoughtfully, still gazing at her, as if half the thing were done.

"Anything I can do for you?" chirped the model kindly.

Still the grey head nodded. "There be," he answered solemnly.

The girl now looked at him a bit closely, puzzled. "Well, what under the sun is it? Here I am—always the ready and agreeable little one!"

"It's 'bout my boy—'bout my only son—my Avery," he replied slowly, blinking once in his stern, staring gaze.

At this Mollie started, her eyes widening, for a brief second, in something akin to fear.

"Yes. What about it? Won't you sit down an' be comfy, though, Mr.—Mr. Memphis?" she smiled, her tone as light and airy as usual.

The old man again shook his head slowly. "No—no, thank'e. Reckon' I'll best be standin'! Yep, it's 'bout Avery—'bout *ye* an' Avery! Reckon ye gather my meanin'?"

Mollie's voice was a trifle hard. "What's the dope?"

Now he eyed her shrewdly, the vestige of a thin leer of satisfaction on his lips. "Ye know it, young woman; know it well!" He stepped forward, his head jutting out on his thin neck, and spoke with a touch of fervor that was unusual in the stern, puritanical mountaineer: "Yep, ye know, well 'nough, what it be; ye know that ye're makin' a fool o' my boy with yer city ways an' city talk an' city clothes; makin' a fool o' my boy an' breakin' his life an' that o' another. He's young, he is—nigh onto twenty-one, no more—an' he don't see under the hides o' people yit. He don't see that ye're jest a-playin' with him, givin' yerself somethin' to take up yer time while ye're up here in the country. He don't see that ye ain't his kind—ye, *a model!* He don't see it an' he's got to be made see it."

Mollie's face, at first, had gone hard and her eyes narrow; but now, when the old man looked at her, he saw only laughing, reckless blue eyes and laughing, reckless mouth.

"Well, why don't you go ahead an' show him, then?" she enquired flippantly.

"It's *ye* that's got to show him," he snapped out, his eyes glinting and his voice rising; "ye've got to show him when he comes here today, not long from now. I know—I know! Didn't I talk an' argy with the young fool last night—almost all the night? Didn't he tell me how he loved ye—ha, ha! *loved* ye—an' had asked ye to marry him? An' didn't he tell me that ye was to give him his answer, an' he thought it'ud be fav'rable—*he* called it—this afternoon? Didn't I fight an' argy an' argy an' fight to try an' make him see sense—an' didn't he say he was goin' ahead an' marry ye?"

He glared at her menacingly, as if she alone were to blame. Now, he had lost all his reserve, and the fierce anger in him, so well held in check most of his life, leaped forth with a quiet strength and fervor.

"Well, suppose I want to marry him? Suppose I happen to *like* the boy? Suppose I *do* marry him today?"

Her voice had been light, nor had her face changed from its reckless deviltry—and the old man stepped forward and shook his fist in the air:

"Suppose ye marry him, heh? *Suppose ye marry him?* Well—well—ye *won't* marry him, by the righteous Lord! Ye won't marry him an' make a fool out o' him; ye won't marry him an' tire o' him an' sigh fer yer pernicious city an' then go off an' leave him! I know ye; I know yer kind. That's what ye'd do! Ye'd never be satisfied with this life an' ye know it—*ye couldn't* be! I—I'll run ye out o' town—I'll have the law on ye—I'll shame ye to death—I—" He paused, glaring helplessly.

"Gee," drawled the girl, "just for that I've a good mind to marry the kid—what?"

The old man eyed her now with a calculating, understanding light dawning in his eyes. Presently he spoke, abruptly, coldly, decisively. "Hmmm! How much'll ye take, eh? I'll pay yer fare back to the city—an' give ye somethin' besides! What's yer low figger?" He smiled thinly, thinking that he had struck upon the clinching argument.

"Beat it, old boy. You ain' got the money!"

He rubbed the stubble on his jaw. "Hogs weren't bad last fall. How much?"

"You ain't got the money—this whole town ain't. Didn't it occur to you I might like to settle down with the rubes?"

Again the old man studied her, still more closely. His voice was more normal when he spoke. "Reckon ye can't be bought nor scairt; reckon I'll have to tell ye the truth. Thought I couldn't appeal to ye, at first, an' that's why I didn't tell ye. Thought it'ud only make ye raise yer price. Reckon —reckon I *mought* appeal to what woman's left in ye!" He spoke calmly, as if simply dissecting the inner working of one of his own cattle.

The girl, for an instant, flushed. Then she drawled lightly: "Shoot!"

He moved his head solemnly: "Mmmm—reckon I will! Reckon I *will* tell ye why I want ye to leave my boy be an' go way an' let him fergit ye an' this fool craze o' his! It ain't only him ye'd be hurtin', marryin' him; it'ud be someone else,—a little girl with a heart o' gold! Little Rose —Rose Lambrill! She's livin' over on the next farm to us with her maw. She an' Avery has been a-keepin' company fer nigh on from since they was babies, ye might say. She loves him—loves him with all the heart o' her—an' he loved her afore *ye* came! Yep, he loved her an' was goin' to marry her this fall, when he's twenty-one—an' now the pore girl's eatin' an' eatin' her heart out!" He paused again, eyeing her to see what impression his words were making.

Mollie Varron returned his glance with bitterness. "Why shouldn't he love me if he wants? I know these

country marriages—they're all cooked up by the father an' mother, an' the boy an' girl ain't even given a chance to say whether they like it or not—they ain't even given a chance to see anyone else! You've made this match; you've wanted it—an' you don't care a hang whether your boy does or not, ain't that so?"

He frowned. "That bea'n't the thing. He an' Rose is promised—they was goin' to hitch up on his buthday. I tell ye he loved her afore ye came—an' that ye've jest blinded him with yer city face an' city ways an' city talk, that's all! An'—an' ye're killin' the heart o' one o' the best girls in the world. She loves him; the sun jest sots by him an' rises by him, to Rose. She'd be a good wife to him, the kind o' wife he needs—an' the kind o' wife ye couldn't be! An'—an' if he don't marry her, it'll nigh kill her; an'—an' she mought have a hard time gettin' another—although that ain't here nor there! She—she's got a lame leg, Rose has. She's as purty as a picture, though; an' as fine o' soul an' with a heart o' gold an'—an' she loves my boy with all o' her! Think—think! Ain't ye got no woman left in ye! Is it fair, ye comin' up here from the city an' breakin' up two lives—is it fair? I ask ye to think o' Rose—lame, alone, sobbin' out her life an' breakin' her heart because a girl from the city come an' took her man away jest—jest fer the fun o' it! Ye wouldn't keep him; ye'd throw him away an' go back to yer city—like as not run off with some drummer feller! Anyway, no matter what ye did, ye'd break a heart o' gold o' one o' the finest girls in the country—a girl that's got more right to Avery than ye have—a girl that's known him all her life, when you've known him fer a week! An' she a pore girl that can't rightly fight her own fight! Think o' that—think o' that an' let me buy yer ticket back—think o' *her* an' let the woman in ye decide! He'd fergit in a week or a month an' be happy to take his Rose! Yep, think o' *her*, with her pore heart o' gold, an' let the woman in ye decide!"

He finished dramatically, with an air of finality, stretching his lank, stooped frame and looking her straight and clearly in the eyes.

Mollie spoke tersely. "That straight goods?"

He came back instantly. "By the God I worship I ain't lied!"

For a brief second or two, the girl searched his face, her lips gradually tightening. Then she stepped forward and waved jerkily at the door:

"Get out—get out! Get out before I kill you!"

The old man stepped back, his eyes widened in puzzlement: "But—but what ye goin' to do," he asked, quaveringly. "What ye goin' to do 'bout—"

"Get out, damn you—*get out before I kill you!*" she shrieked.

And, before the tempest of her anger, the old man stumbled backward out of the room, his face really frightened and his lips moving incoherently.

For a moment, Mollie gazed at the door. Then, swiftly, she crossed to the ancient bell rope by the window and jangled it furiously and without cessation. Presently, in answer to her summons, the florid and puffing proprietor appeared, mopping his face and looking about with wide, frightened

eyes. "Be there any trouble, Miss?" he panted nervously.

Mollie spoke quickly: "No. Just tell Mr. Summers, the drummer, that I want to see him right away—right away! He's on the porch—I heard him talkin'!"

Almost immediately, the individual who had so repeatedly pressed her to "have a little party with me, kid," arrived. On his vacuous face there was a look of triumph, as if he had been sure that it was but the inevitable thing for her to at last succumb to his charms and—as he described it—"class."

He waved his hand and smiled breezily. "'Lo, kid. Tired of chasin' the rubes an' wanna hit up with a live wire? Eh? What?"

Mollie flashed him a smile. "Right you are, boy; right you are! Gonna give you that party you been wantin'! Hurry up an' rush the stuff—don't be a piker—get one of those two bottles of fizz the old gink down stairs says he's got. Chase it in a hurry—chase it in a hurry, I tell you!"

The drummer, for a moment, seemed frightened; but then, telling himself that it looked as if it might be worth the price, he grinned as gracefully as he could, under the circumstances, and "chased it in a hurry."

"Back in a jiffy with the big bottle, kid," he threw back, winking suggestively.

Mollie, at his exit, clicked her jaws viciously and hastily tore off her skirt and waist. Rushing to the closet she donned a filmy, transparent, delicate blue morning wrap. Then, at the mirror, she pushed her hair awry, kicked off her pumps, and thrust her feet into a dainty pair of bedroom slippers. She sat down just as Summers returned, with a tin bucket filled with ice and a bottle of champagne stuck into it.

"I'm the boy, all right—I'm the little Johnny-on-the-spot guy, all right, all right!" he roared, setting down the pail and rubbing his hands as he looked at the girl hungrily.

"Sure you are," snapped Mollie; "you're twenty-two carat an' no mistake, kid. But here; gimme a cigarette—quick! An' open up that fizz—still quicker!"

He looked at her a moment, reaching out his arms to grasp her.

"Not now," said Mollie; "gimme a drink first—quick!"

He set about her orders slowly, quite pleased with himself. But, as Mollie heard a voice below, she rushed to his side:

"Quicker—damn it—quicker," she cried.

The cork popped, the wine bubbled in the two incongruously thick tumblers, and Mollie, pushing the drummer down into a chair, hastily flung herself into his lap. One arm, with the hand holding her cigarette, was about his neck; in the other, she held aloft the tumbler of champagne; and her reckless, laughing, devil-may-care face was flushed and wild as a knock sounded on the door.

"Come on in—come on ahead in, kid, an' sit with the fun," she shouted, laughing drunkenly.

Quickly the door opened and a tall, straight, clear-eyed young fellow entered—only to step back with a gasp of horror on his lips at what he saw,

his fresh, fair face going a deathly white.

The drummer sat, grinning inanely, as pleased with himself as if he had conquered worlds.

Mollie, waving her glass high, turned suddenly and kissed him resoundingly on the lips. She laughed joyously.

"Come on in, kid—come on in an' have a drink. Join the party, rube—zip, join the party an' be a real guy! Right this way—right this way!"

"Sure! Have a drink, hayseed—have a drink," rollicked the drummer.

Avery Memphis stood rigid, his mouth and eyes wide with horror. For a long moment he did not move; then, slowly, dazedly, with his whole body trembling and weak, he brushed his hand across his forehead and blinked.

"My God," he murmured, his voice dull and hoarse, "my God!" Turning, he staggered out, a cry on his lips. It was not a cry for the girl in the room; it was a cry of what he deemed awakening addressed to another:

"Rose—Rose! I—"

The door slammed!

The drummer emitted a howl of joy. "Wow, wow, wow! Some lil' shocked rube—eh, what? Ha, ha, ha, ha!" And he flung his arms madly about Mollie and pressed his sleek face close to her own. "Come on, kid—come on an' love me nice," he breathed fatuously.

Now it was Mollie who turned white—turned a raging, tigerish white of fearful loathing that amounted almost to madness. Fiercely, she threw her tumbler across the room, dropped her cigarette, and sent her two little fists against the drummer's face, sending him reeling to the floor as she sprang away:

"Leave me alone—leave me alone an' don't touch me or I'll kill you," she shrieked.

Then, through drawn lips and entirely to herself, as if the drummer had completely faded from view:

"Heart of gold—heart of gold! God, I loved him—I loved him, too! I wanted something clean; something good! *I* came from the farm, too—years ago it seems now, but—but it's only four! I wanted the green an' the trees an' the chickens an' the—God—dear God, I love him, I love him, I love him!"

And the drummer slipped from the room, frightened and trembling, in order to get away from this hysterically sobbing girl who had, in some unaccountable manner, gone suddenly and entirely mad.

Next month: THE SCULPIN, *by LeRoy Kenneth*, a story of the sealing grounds—where a man's a man if he wears mittens and a suspicious character if he wears gloves.

THE HORN OF MARCUS BRUNDER

BY HOWARD REYNOLDS

If at times you have been on the point of writing to some patent attorney for his list of "hundreds of needed inventions," read this story and save your postage. The way of the inventor is hard.

PICKING his way carefully through the crowded downtown streets I had often noticed a strange, bent figure—a man of remarkably shrewd and intelligent face—but having the appearance of premature age and wearing that look peculiar to those deprived of some important faculty. What he lacked I could not conjecture. At first I thought the shrewd eyes might be sightless, but the man never hesitated in taking a step among the whirling vehicles. Then deafness suggested itself as the old man's infirmity, but was in turn dismissed. The enormous horn slung to a strap across his shoulder did not resemble a speaking trumpet—it looked more like an immense megaphone, except for its gracefully curved outlines and handsome enamel and nickel finish. The peculiarity that attracted most attention—one at which almost every idle pedestrian stopped to stare—was the odd looking old man's inveterate habit of hitching up one shoulder and frequently bringing the smaller end of his queer horn on a line with his hat brim. The only remaining alternative, therefore, seemed to suggest that this strange looking individual must be dumb, but had contrived some extraordinary kind of instrument for making himself intelligible to others; but here theory was opposed by the fact that, so far as my observation went, he never tried to communicate with others.

It was, therefore, with surprise, not unmixed with gratification, that I saw him one day stop suddenly, with one of his peculiar hitches, and extend a cordial hand to my friend Hudson, who is in the electrical supply business. They carried on a brief, but apparently animated, conversation, and when they separted I hastened after Hudson and enquired the name of his queer acquaintance.

"That!" cried Hudson. "Why, that's Marcus Brunder and his horn. I thought everybody knew about Marcus. Come, step in and lunch with me, and I'll tell you all about him."

As we lunched Hudson talked, and told me the following strange story, and as I give it pretty nearly in his exact words, I shall use no marks of quotation:

For years, you know, I have had a store fronting on Devonshire Street. It is on the ground floor, its large plate-glass windows afford a broad view of the busy thoroughfare, and above all, it is particularly central and convenient.

But it is maddeningly noisy.

The great drays that continually pour through this main artery of commerce produce a roar of wheels and clatter of vehicles that fairly shake the building. With the ventilator-windows open we are deafened—with them closed we simply stifle. Ordinary conversation is rendered practically impossible during business hours.

Formerly I used to take prospective buyers into the big fire-proof vault at the extreme rear of the office, until one day there was trouble with the lock. I happened to be inside at the time. So was the president of one of the largest concerns in New England.

It was a cheerful moment when, after two hours of semi-suffocation with our noses against a cold steel door-sill, the professional safe-openers on the outside announced that they would be obliged to use dynamite. When we crawled out the prospective customer had lost both eyebrows, most of his hair, and one whisker. And he didn't buy the goods, after all!

But, notwithstanding all the drawbacks, I have somehow stuck to the same old store; why, I can't exactly say; it's just my disposition. I hate a change.

One morning I had just arrived in my office, when in walked Brunder. Now, I'm not saying a word against Brunder. He's an inventor, and—unlike most of them—some of the things he gets up actually work. We paid him a thousand dollars for a single device only last spring. It lasted him just two weeks. Then he started in to invent something else.

Well, anyway, Brunder came in and sat down. I yanked open a couple of ventilators to let in the fresh morning air, and conversation immediately became an athletic feat. We communicated, partly in pantomime, for some time, when Brunder suddenly yelled, "Say, I have a scheme."

"What is it now?" I yelled back.

"Shut those infernal transoms and I'll tell you," said he.

I did as he requested and he proceeded.

"This noise is something terrible," he vociferated, sitting close to me and talking into my ear.

I nodded. Some years ago I learned to save my strength.

"But I have a plan for doing away with it entirely!"

I looked surprised.

"It's based on well-known principals of physics, but is an entirely original and unique application of them."

I looked still more surprised.

"It just came to me as I was sitting here," he explained. "You know that it has been proven that both light and sound travel in waves! Also that it's an old law of physics that 'action and reaction are equal.'"

I nodded again with a grin—recollecting at the moment the spectacle I had once seen of two colored waiters, laden with dishes, on opposite sides of a swing-door, each trying to kick his way through at the same instant. I told this to Brunder.

"Precisely; that's the point! The door stood still!" he exclaimed. "Now, I read the other day that somebody has discovered that by throwing beams of light of the same intensity directly at each other the light waves nullified each other and produced a distinct zone of darkness. That being

the case, what's the matter with generating a sound of equal intensity and projecting it against the other sound—and letting the sounds, as it were, swallow each other up—like the Kilkenny cats!"

"And sitting in the resulting sound vacuum?" I asked.

"Precisely."

"Well, but how are you ever going to work to do that?" I asked, incredulously.

"Easy enough. There is such a thing as a microphone—an instrument that so magnifies sound that you can hear a fly walk."

"So I believe," said I. "If I remember, it consists of a tiny double-pointed carbon suspended between two standards and connected with a receiver."

"Exactly so. Now take a Wheatstoe bridge, such as is used in the naval range finders, and rig it up so that varying impulses will work, by means of electro-magnets, a sliding plug in, say, an organ pipe, adjusting it automatically to any pitch. Connect the pipe up with a motor-driven compressed air blower, and there you are!"

"Why," concluded the excited inventor in a burst of enthusiasm, "it would make this bedlam of an office as quiet and peaceful as a village church.

"But it will take just a little money," he continued with an appealing glance. "Simply for a few preliminary experiments; and, if there's anything at all in it—there's a fortune!"

Thereupon I did an unwise but very human thing. I think the amount was twenty-five dollars.

Days came and went, and with them the radiant and sanguine Brunder. First it was drawings and then it was patterns, and last it was twelve-gauge copper and insulating tape, and slowly, with the aid of sundry and numerous five and ten-dollar bills the marvellous mechanism went together.

Brunder, from time to time, reported good progress and finally came in one afternoon with the startling, and to me most unexpected announcement, that the thing actually would work.

"Not perfectly by any means, just yet—for it's full of flickers and stutters and skips—something like a phonograph; but just give me a week."

I did—and also a check for fifty.

At the end of that time he came in, exultant.

We shut the ventilators so he could talk, and he imparted to me in a hoarse and joyous whisper that it was a "sure winner." "Just one more test," said he, "and then I'll show it to you. I've just this minute got the permission of the Government to try it down to the Sandy Hook Proving Grounds. If it stands that it will stand anything. And the non-auditory radius is three feet four," said he with pride.

It would cost just $14.75 to get to the Sandy Hook Proving Grounds and return. In my joy I made it an even $15.

After the date when Brunder was due back from New York I missed him for three days. At the end of that time I ran around to the little eighth story back room which he uses as a sort of office and laboratory.

The first thing my eyes fell upon,

as I opened the door, was a huge piece of mechanism, which might have been anything from an incubator to a steam mangle, and which emitted a low droning. Beyond was Brunder sitting with his back to me, at a desk.

As I shut the door he did not look around, but continued his writing, undisturbed. Then I noticed suspended from the ceiling, and within reach of Brunder's hand, the immense horn that has puzzled you and others so much.

"By Jove," said I, with a gasp of astonishment, "I believe the thing does work, after all!" I looked narrowly to see if the desk was connected with a wire, or whether his chair stood on an insulated mat, or anything of the kind. Then I walked toward him. I found I could plainly hear my own footsteps as well as other sounds, but, apparently, he was in the charmed zone and oblivious to any noise. I touched him on the shoulder, and with a jump of startled surprise he brought the small end of the horn to his ear, with that peculiar jerk of his, and said "Hello!"

"Well, tell us all about it?" I asked.

He leaned farther toward me and hitched the big horn closer.

"What luck did you have, old man?" I rejoined, louder.

He shook his head mournfully and handed out a pad and pencil.

"This is *great*," I scrawled. "You're a wonder. I always knew you'd do it."

"Well—I don't know," said he. "I took my position six feet to one side of a 12-inch coast defence mortar. The charge was five hundred pounds. I can't tell whether my machine worked or not. They pulled the string—and I haven't heard anything since!"

But he has learned since then, by constant practice at the little end of the horn, to hear much of what is going on around him!

In the November number: LOST—A STAR, *by Kenneth Vaux Reed*. This particular star just bubbled melody and she got her price for it, too. She never had to put an "At Liberty" ad in the theatrical weeklies. Yet she was not satisfied. She wanted a new deal.

SIMPLE SIMON WENT A-FISHING

BY VERNON L. CLEMENS

Did Simple Simon catch the whale? So far as we know there is no reliable information on this point. It is simply stated that he went fishing for one. We are therefore offering this story as a sequel. It is the same Simple Simon, but he has aged a little and has changed his fishing ground.

ON one of the green wooden benches in the park, sat Rufus Gottlieb Gondeuschlager. His thin bent form and narrow chest, his white hair, and his grey, tobacco-stained whiskers, gave evidence to the fact that the best years of his life had already passed.

Directly in front of him grew luxuriantly a bed of gorgeous tulips. Gondeuschlager's eyes, large, blue-grey, and expressionless, seemed to be fixed on the flowers. Every now and then, as he sat there, he would slowly move his big feet back and forth over the short, soft, green grass, as if trying to decide whether, perhaps, some other spot in the park might not be more adapted to his particular line of business.

Business? Imagine an old, narrow-chested, white-haired, grey-whiskered man using the city park as a place of business, and having as his office stool a green, weather-beaten park bench! Imagine, in fact, this same old man holding in his hand a fishing rod and line, at the end of which a big, sharp, black hook held a little fat brown worm.

As Rufus Gottlieb Gondeuschlager sat there with his fishing pole in hand and his line dangling over a sea of gorgeous color, somebody approached. It was a young man—tall, perfectly built, perfectly tailored. His name was Herbert Jesse Steinbaucher.

The expression on Steinbaucher's face, when he saw the old man, was a combination of amusement, ridicule and contempt! Could it be possible that this poor old fellow was an escaped lunatic? Or was he simply childish? He did not seem childish. Perhaps, after all, he was insane.

All of this time Gondeuschlager kept his eyes fixed on the very center of the flower bed. As Herbert came up to where he was sitting, he smiled gently, but only as if to himself.

Herbert Jesse Steinbaucher grinned, and sat down on the bench close beside the old fellow.

"Say, uncle, what do you think you are doing?"

Slowly, and with seemingly considerable effort, old Rufus raised his head and looked at Herbert. Then in a voice gravely serious, he said:

"Sir, I am fishing."

Hilarious explosions followed the answer to Herbert's question. He laughed and laughed and laughed. This thing—fishing in a park out of a flower bed—was so ridiculous.

These violent eruptions of Herbert's seemed to have no effect whatever on old man Gondeuschlager. He acted like a person in a stupor. Herbert moved up close to Gondeuschlager—so close that his face and old

Rufus's whiskers almost touched.

"Fishing, eh?" Then, "Say, uncle, what's the matter with you and me having a—drink?"

Rufus Gottlieb Gondeuschlager, like a flash of chain lightning across a rain-beaten country road at midnight, came to life. A mischievous sparkle shone from his large, blue-grey eyes. His lips opened and closed oyster fashion. He got to his feet quickly and drew in the fishing tackle from his imaginary pond. Winding the line around the pole, and carefully fastening the big, sharp, black hook so that it could not swing, he put the rod over his shoulder. Together, as rapidly as the stiff rheumatic legs and corn plastered feet of the old man would permit, the two marched down the street and entered a dazzling, tobacco-perfumed saloon. Here the old man regaled himself with a large glass of dark beer and a good ten cent cigar. Herbert, standing beside him, eyed old Rufus with an expression of surprise, wonder and admiration. But Gondeuschlager merely continued to sip and to smoke. Then, suddenly growing extremely curious, Herbert stepped up close to the old man and in almost a whisper, he said:

"So, uncle, you were fishing, were you? And how many have you caught this morning?" He was still vastly amused at the very idea of this thin, narrow-chested, white-haired, grey-whiskered old man trying to get fish out of a bed of flowers.

Rufus Gottlieb Gondeuschlager took another sip from his glass and another draw on his cigar. Then, after blowing a cloud of smoke across the bar, he turned to his questioner. He bowed with prodigious gravity, and his smile was very broad now, as he answered:

"You are the seventh, sir."

In the November issue: THE BONE OF A CAMEL, *by Erich Brandeis,* the story of a man who set out to prove that the Arabian poets of the pre-Mohammedan period wrote their narrative poems on camel bones.

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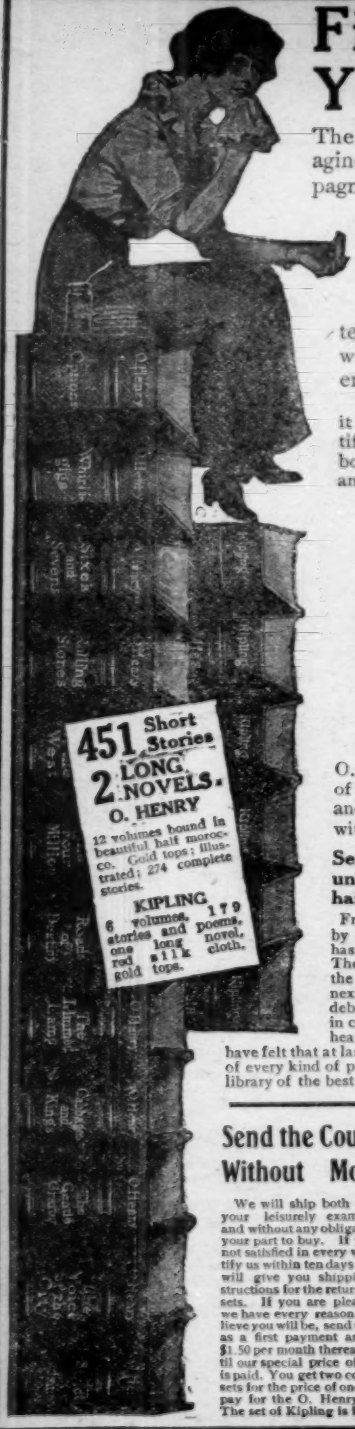
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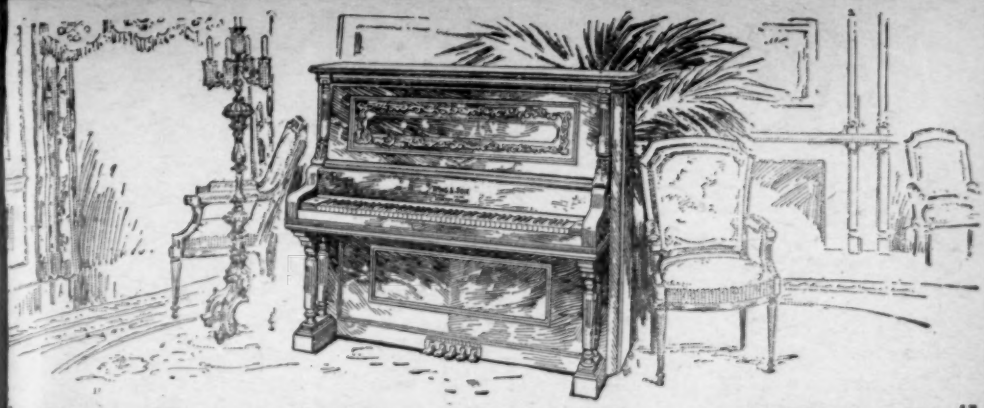

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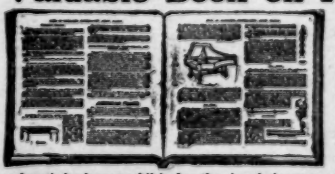

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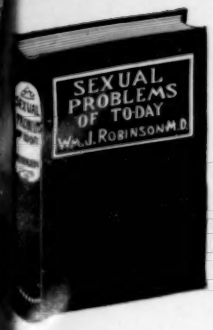

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